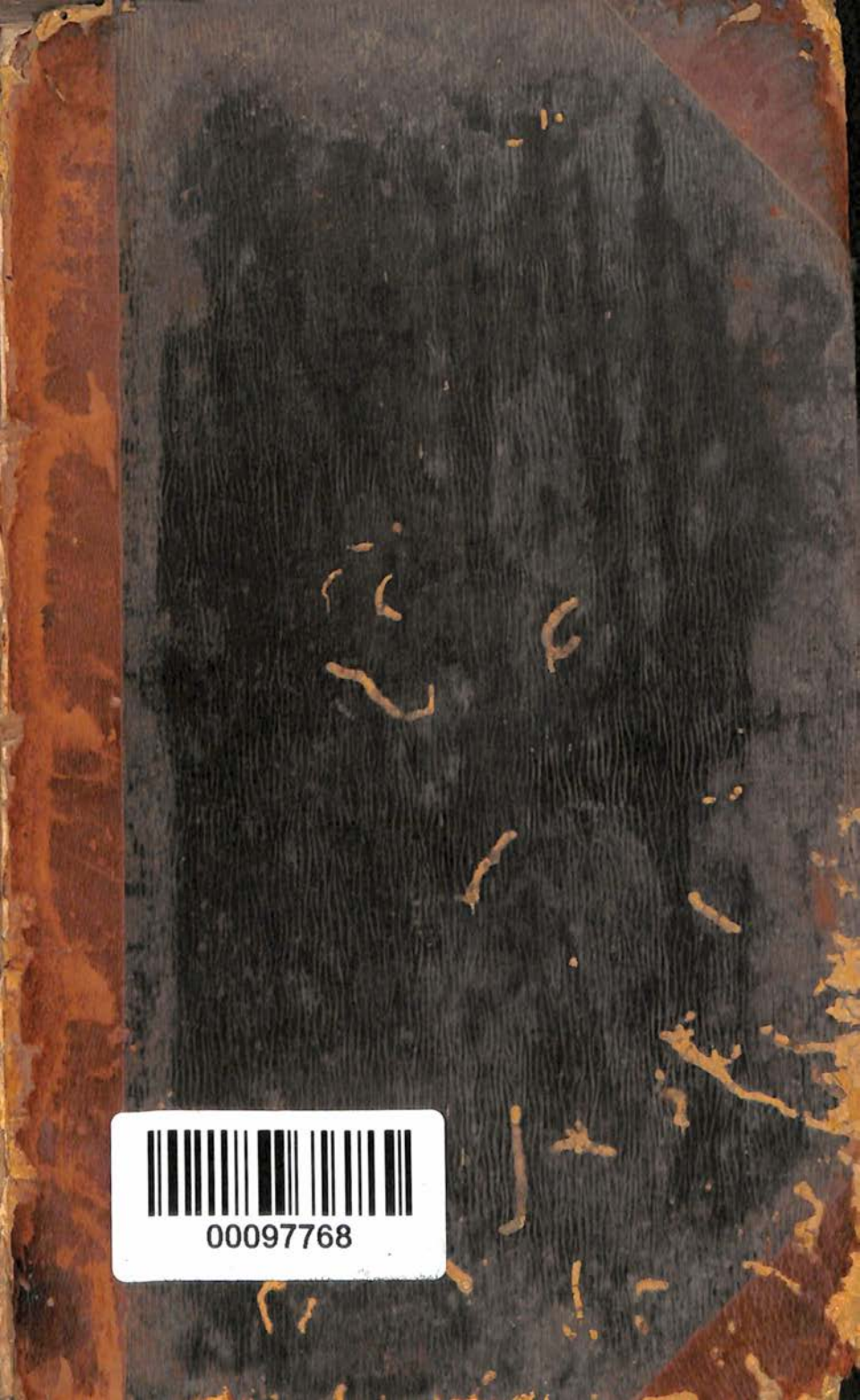
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BOMBAY BRANCH

OF THE

Royal Asiatic Society.

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HISTORICAL & LITERARY

MEMOIRS AND ANECDOTES,

SELECTED FROM THE

CORRESPONDENCE

OF

BARON DE GRIMM

AND

DIDEROT

WITH

THE DUKE OF SAXE-GOTHA,

AND MANY OTHER DISTINGUISHED PERSONS

BETWEEN THE YEARS 1753 AND 1790.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

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HISTORICAL AND LITERARY

MEMOIRS AND ANECDOTES.

PART THE SECOND.

Paris, January 1770.

THE day before yesterday, *the Two Friends*, a drama in five acts, and in prose, by M. Caron de Beaumarchais, author of Eugenia, was performed for the first time, at the French theatre. This writer seems to have made a great mistake, for he has no friends. One of our Paris wits wrote upon the bill, on the first day of representation, the *Two Friends, by an author who has none.*

His father, Caron, was a watch-maker of considerable reputation, and left him an easy fortune. He himself had made some progress in learning the business; and, it is said that, at the age of eighteen, he had discovered the secret of Graham's balance, which contributed essentially towards enriching his father. He would have done much better in continuing to make good watches than in purchasing a place at court, playing off the great man, and composing bad plays for Paris. At the third representation of the opera of Zoroaster, the house being very thin, M. de Beaumarchais said to Mademoiselle Arnoud, "*In a few days, when*

every one has seen the house, you will have nobody, or at least, very few people."—"*Your friends will send company,*" replied Mademoiselle Arnoud.

This actress, known also under the name of Sophy, has the privilege of saying smart things; she it was who, observing there was nobody present at the second performance of William Tell, said "*Here is an author who falsifies the proverb :—No money no Swiss.*" When, after the celebrated adventure of M. de Belloy's *Siege of Calais,* Mademoiselle Clairon quitted the theatre and said, with an emphasis altogether touching and pathetic, that the king was master of her life and fortune, but not of her honour; Sophy answered, "*You are in the right, madam, where there is nothing the king loses his rights.*"—A pleasant collection might be made of Sophy's repartees, which have all the air of those of a woman of light character, but of one who had abundance of wit.

The French Theatre has just lost an actor by name Paulin, who had been upon the stage ever since the year 1742. In tragedy he played the characters of tyrants, in comedy those of peasants. These two characters may be united in an actor, though it is joining two extremities, the oppressor and the oppressed. He was a tolerable peasant but a bad tyrant; his performance was heavy and devoid of intellect, but his voice was powerful: this was what deluded M. de Voltaire; he fancied him not devoid of talents and used to say,

"*Let me alone, I'll nurse you up as pretty a tyrant as you can possibly wish.*" The tyrant, however, did not answer his expectations, Paulin was always a bad actor. The character in which Voltaire expected him to succeed the best, was that of Polipontes in his own tragedy of Merope. While this tragedy was in rehearsal, the author, according to his usual custom, overwhelmed the actors with corrections. One day, after having passed the night in re-examining and re-considering his piece, he called up his servant at three in the morning to carry a correction to Paulin; the servant observed, that it was a very unusual hour to carry a message to any one, and that Paulin was probably asleep; "*Go,*" answered Voltaire gravely, "*run, tyrants never sleep!*"

The president, Henault, has just published a collection of dramatic pieces in verse and prose, one vol. 8vo. ornamented with vignettes. The first is *Cornelia the Vestal*, a tragedy in five acts, in verse. This tragedy was played more than half a century ago, but did not succeed; a mistaken idea of courtesy, induced Mr. Walpole some years since, to print a few copies of it at his own private press, and at length it is printed in France. If I am not mistaken, I have done myself the honour of giving you an account of it; it is miserable indeed. The second piece in the collection is entitled *The New French Theatre, or Francis the Second, King of France, in five acts, in prose, second edition, en-*

riched with notes. About twenty years are now elapsed since Francis the Second was printed for the first time. It should seem that Henault took the idea of this singular piece from Shakspeare, since the tragedies of that great genius equally include nearly the whole history of a man's life; but there is no other affinity between the English poet and the French proser. The President flattered himself with having struck out a new method of treating historical subjects, in substituting for narration, scenes and conversations between the several personages concerned; but a very different head was requisite to succeed in such a mode of writing. This worthy man, who was rich, who kept an excellent table, and was a very pleasant companion, gave suppers which were frequented by all persons of note in France; but this was not enough he must also distinguish himself as one of the literati, and he succeeded, to a certain degree. His *Chronological Abridgement of the History of France,* is one of the most celebrated books of the times; but if it had been written by a poor author, inhabiting a garret, it would scarcely have been honoured with even a contemptuous glance from our great literary censors. His theatrical pieces prove that he had no talent whatever for dramatic writing: for the rest he led a happy and easy life. His great anxiety was, lest he should displease the late queen in ordering his remains to be interred among the fathers of the Christian doctrine, by whom he was educated.—

These fathers were vehemently suspected, by her majesty, of leaning to Jansenism; and the President, from a certain feebleness of mind, had promised this pious and orthodox sovereign, that his bones should be disposed of elsewhere: he, however, never altered his original dispositions, and was always dying with apprehension lest he should quit the world before the queen, when this little piece of duplicity would be betrayed.

February, 1770.

God, in his mercy, has granted to the patriarch of Ferney, the gift of playing, in his passage through life, a great variety of characters, but no one would ever guess the last that has been conferred upon him. The temporal father of the Capucins, in the country of Gex, being dead, M. de Voltaire wrote to the Pope to solicit his place; Clement Ganganelli, who has much more wit than Clement Rezzonico, sent him the patent, and the patriarch has, in consequence, taken possession of his new dignity. He will, by this means, be brought more in contact with the bishop of Annecy, whom the *temporal father* will seek to reimburse for the tricks which his mightiness was pleased, last year, to play the *lord of Ferney*. It is said that the latter has already written the bishop several letters, signed with a Cross, and *Voltaire, an unworthy Capucin*. He says that those who have predicted that he would die a Capucin, will not now be mistaken, and that he shall esteem himself happy if, at his age, he can

arrive at the good fortunes of one. I have no doubt that, under his temporality, the seraphic order will soon recover its ancient splendor. One who occasionally visits at Ferney, and is just come from thence, told us the other day, that, at his arrival, the patriarch said to him "*You see a great change, but we are all apt to become canters in our old age, and I have taken to the practice of having some pious work read to me every day when I sit down to table.*" In effect, one of the people about him began to read a sermon of Masillon's, during which the patriarch exclaimed perpetually, "*Oh how fine that is! what a style! what harmony! what eloquence!*"—Then, all on a sudden, after three or four pages had been read, he exclaimed "*take away Massillon!*" The book was shut, and its admirer resigned himself to the usual liveliness and playfulness of his imagination; an imagination which will, with great difficulty, conform itself to the gravity necessary for a temporal father of the Capucins.

Paris, March 1, 1770.

On the 19th of last month was performed, for the first time, *Silvain*, a comedy in five acts, interspersed with songs, by M. Marmontel. The people of the court and of the great world, have exclaimed much against the tendency and moral of this piece: M. de Noailles says, that the conclusion to be drawn from it is, in few words, that a man ought to marry his maid-servant, and suffer his

peasants to poach on his lands as much as they please. The most curious part of the story is, that the great people are all firmly persuaded that such subjects are brought forwards by the philosophers, expressly for the purpose of spreading their dangerous opinions, respecting the prejudices of high birth, and the equality of all men. Silvain, for example, they consider as having been composed by a general agreement, among the whole body of *Encyclopedists*, as a medium for preaching at the theatre during the Lent of 1770, their doctrine of the chimera of illustrious birth and the right of freedom in killing game. Thus it is that mankind are always seeking for deep and hidden causes as the origin of the most common and ordinary events. They will not consult me at court; they will not consult me in the world: they are in the wrong, and lose themselves in idle speculations: I could, at once, have given them the solution of the mystery; it is that what they attribute to a plot among the whole philosophical party, is only the very natural effect of M. Marmontel's want of talent for dramatic writing; it is much more easy for a writer to be extravagant than simple; to imagine romantic events and manners, than to find real events, and to paint manners such as they are, in a natural, easy and interesting way. Those little strokes of manner which shew exquisite taste in the poet, but require the utmost accuracy of observation, are alone capable of giving truth and character to his person-

ages; and it must not be supposed because the little dramas of M. Sedaine are natural and easy in themselves, that it is easy to write like them.

The want of being natural is the great defect in Silvain. To give the idea of a good landlord, the author makes his hero allow all his peasants to shoot upon his lands; but, M. Marmontel, this would only be the means of destroying all the game in the country. A good landlord, anxious to promote the welfare of his peasantry, would consider the granting them an unlimited power of shooting, as tending to turn them aside from the cares of husbandry; he would fear that their fields would be neglected, that their hearts would be alienated from their business, and that they would be converted into a set of idlers and vagabonds. He will restrain himself to having so much of the game killed by proper persons, as that the peasantry may not be injured by the superabundance of it, and will shew his kindness to them in many other ways. He will be godfather to the child of one, because he is a worthy and industrious man; he will advance money to another who has occasion for a sum to enable him to engage in some useful enterprise; he will give a marriage portion to the daughter of that industrious old man who wants a son-in-law to assist him in the management of his affairs; he will give a cow to the poor widow who lives at the bottom of the avenue leading to his house, the care of which will at once occupy her time and contri-

bute to her support. Such a man is really a good landlord, but he does not in the least resemble that of M. Marmontel.

April, 1770.

A volume in octavo of nearly four hundred pages, entitled, *Things Useful and Agreeable*, is just come out, from the manufactory of Ferney; it is called a second volume, though, hitherto, nobody has seen the first. The pieces are not all of Voltaire's own writing, there are some from different hands. Among other things, is a letter from the patriarch to Dr. Warburton, not written in a very tender style: this Warburton, who on his side is constantly writing against the patriarch, may be called the *La Beaumelle* of England. Another article is an oration in verse, *upon the disputes*, by M. de Rulhiere, whom the editor, mangling his name, calls M. de Lullier; it was composed for the prize at the French Academy.

M. de Rulhiere succeeded the Baron de Breteuil in his embassies to Russia and Sweden: he is certainly a man of talent, he makes good verses and writes prose with elegance and perspicuity, but he is far from being what may fairly be termed a *bel esprit*. He is one of those men who always go straight forwards without looking either to the right or the left, and this is a road which often leads to a mad-house. Never place yourself directly in such a man's way, but walk by his side as long as you please, he will not perceive you. When the

question is to make him recur to the past and give an account of it, he readily supplies from his imagination every thing that he has not seen; he does not suppose that he swerves from the truth, having never seen what the truth is; he has not forgotten it, for he never knew it. If I were the minister for foreign affairs, and were desirous of having false notions concerning all the states and cabinets of Europe, such are the men that I would employ. M. de Rulhiere was sent to the courts of Petersburgh and Stockholm, perhaps with this view. He has at present an appointment in the office for foreign affairs, with a salary, but without any determinate function attached to it. He took upon himself (with a rashness altogether incredible) to write the *History of the last Revolution in Russia*, and with an insensibility even more surprising, he has now for several years been in the habit of reading this choice morsel in all the societies he frequents. It is entirely the effect of chance that the work has not yet fallen into the hands of some hungry printer, for the author has done every thing in his power to procure it such a fate. A discreet man would never sleep if he had permitted himself to compose such a narrative; but, indeed, a man of any discretion would not have composed it; fools have a temerity of which a wise man has no idea. I was once in a company, at Paris, when Rulhiere read his work; the circle consisted of twenty persons, and was composed of all the nations in Europe. He placed himself by the side of Prince

Adam Czartoriski, and paused at every moment, to ask him how he liked that; in the same manner did he interrogate the cousin-german of the king of Poland; though at the very commencement of his narrative it is stated that the king had administered to the pleasures of Sir Charles Williams, minister from Great Britain to the court of Russia, and that to this he owed his fortune. What rendered the scene not the less remarkable, was, that it passed at the house of madame Geoffrin. When the orator had concluded, Prince Czartoriski came up to me and said,— "*Think what must have been my astonishment, and how I must have felt myself embarrassed! think of his reading this to me, in the presence of twenty persons! I was tempted, a hundred times over, to rise and leave the room.*" Scarcely had the prince quitted me, when Rulhiere came up and said; "*Well, the prince is delighted; is he not?*"— This trait is sufficient to shew the wise head of the author and the discretion that reigns in his work; it is, however, very interesting, the subject being infinitely so. As to the truth of the facts, no man of common sense can suppose that a foreigner, residing a certain time in a country the least communicative of any in Europe, can have had opportunities of knowing the secret springs that guided this extraordinary transaction, or be in a capacity to relate what passed at the conferences between the Empress and the Count de Panin, or the other principal actors in it. I believe M. de Rulhiere is himself the only person who has confidence in the truth of his narrative.

The Abbé Trublet, canon and archdeacon of Saint Malo, and a member of the French Academy, died at Saint Malo on the 14th of last month; the place vacated in the Academy, by his death, will doubtless be given to M. de Saint Lambert. The Abbé Trublet was not young; he was, to use the expression of M. de Voltaire, a sworn weigher of the eggs of flies, in scales made of a spider's web. He affected great pretensions to talents and refinement, and was as nice about his little style as a coquet about her ornaments, yet he painted with a very light pencil, and his colouring always excited the idea of littleness and poverty of mind. For the rest, a knowledge of the author may, perhaps, have had a considerable influence on the judgment formed of his books. His countenance was mean and disagreeable, his person ignoble and dirty, and he was servile and cringing in his manners, so that he was himself more despised even than his productions. Notwithstanding this repulsive person, the Abbé gave himself out as a very successful gallant among the fair sex, and it certainly is not physically impossible that he might be so; the question is, on what story in the house he found his good fortune? His subaltern propensities attached him to the suite of Messrs. de Fontenelle and de la Motte Houdart, whose hanger-on he became. His great pride was in relating, with the utmost precision, how Fontenelle coughed and spit. After the death of this celebrated man, he published a large *Fontenelliana*, which is a *chef-d'œuvre*, for its insipidity, for the minuteness

of its details, and for the poverty of language in which they are given, though, at the same time, there is throughout an aim at pomposity truly laughable. The Abbé Trublet pretended to great delicacy and ingenuity in the turn of his phrases, and to extreme nicety even in the manner of placing his commas and points; there is indeed a most terrible display of nice taste, in his punctuation. His character was, throughout, that of a man with a shallow mind, but possessing some talents. This brings to my recollection what was said of him by Madame Geoffrin. A person one day, when she was in company, observing that the abbé was really a man of talents, she was very angry, and said, *that he was only a fool lathered with talent; that, to say the truth, some of this froth was rubbed all over him.* She used to say, that men are a composition made from several little pots; there is the little pot of intellect, the little pot of imagination, the little pot of reason, and the great cauldron of *pure folly;* fate takes from each of these pots the portion that suits her fancy, and forms, out of them, the head of a man. According to her, fate intending to compose an Abbé Trublet, sought her materials, in the first instance, only in the great cauldron; but then, fearing she had taken too much from thence, she opened the little pot of intellect, which always boils, and taking out some of the froth, rubbed it over her new work. This has the air of magic and sorcery, but the allegory contains a very just and appropriate moral.

Trublet's best work is his *Essays on Literature,*

Philosophy and Morals, in several volumes. I read these Essays when I was so young that I dare not now hazard an opinion upon them; I believe, however, that if he would have restrained himself to one or two volumes, without ever publishing any thing else, he might have passed for an estimable writer; but he knew not where to stop, and his latter volumes are very inferior to the former. He used to go about, all day, collecting whatever he heard on every side and in every corner, and in the evening formed the collection of the day into paragraphs for his Essays. He once said, that he would engage to produce a volume every six months, on which the Abbé de Cannaie, who was present, and who is exceedingly sarcastic, replied: *That is according to the people you may see.* Maupertuis asserts, that the Abbé Trublet's Essays had so high a reputation in Germany, that the post-masters refused to let their horses to any one who had not read them. In one of these volumes, the author enters into a dissertation to discover the reasons of the *ennui*, occasioned by reading Voltaire's Henriade. This dissertation was the true cause of his immortality. The author of the Henriade, unwilling to be remiss in his gratitude towards the indefatigable *dissertator*, gave him immediately a place in one of his mine pieces; the portrait of the Abbé Trublet in the *Poor Devil*, is a *chef-d'œuvre* which will last as long as French literature itself. The Abbé's great offence against M. de Voltaire was, that the latter had only called him a deacon,

whereas he was in reality an archdeacon. When the patriarch was told that he complained of it, he replied: *I beg his pardon, I am in the wrong; I certainly believed him one of the least.*

Our abbé had, for twenty years been emulous to obtain the honour of a seat in the French Academy, and the constancy with which he pursued his object made him many times very ridiculous. At every vacancy he came from Saint Malo to Paris, in the utmost haste, went round to the members to solicit their votes, was rejected, and returned home as soon as the election was over. One day, Piron, who did not live far from Fontenelle, saw a funeral come out from the door of the latter, and he immediately wrote, as officially charged, to the Abbé Trublet to come and solicit the vacant place. The Abbé arrived in the utmost haste, but found, when he reached Paris, Fontenelle in perfect health and no place vacant. The funeral was that of M. Daube, nephew to Fontenelle; but Piron, thinking it proper that the uncle, who had lived out a century, should die before the nephew who had lived only half the time, hesitated not to say, at once, that it really was so. Trublet, for this time, was consequently quit for only the expences of his journey, he was saved the trouble of his usual visits.

He at length, by means of a happy manœvre, succeeded in getting into the Academy without soliciting any one, and when nobody expected it. He had made a party among the devout, having written for

some time in the *Christian Journal*, and had even found means to get a representation made to the queen, that his labours in the service of religion had drawn upon him the hatred of the philosophers; and that the manner in which he was stigmatized in the *Poor Devil*, proved to what a point he was a martyr in the good cause. The christian heart of her majesty was moved, and a cabal was formed which the President Henault undertook to conduct; the secret was well kept, and Trublet had the plurality of voices, to the great astonishment of most of the academicians.

Since the approach of the jubilee is a time of confession and remission, I must accuse myself, and some others of a similar stamp, with having amused ourselves for a long time at the expence of the Abbé Trublet. We supposed that, intending to offer himself at every vacancy, he had always forty eulogiums ready made, so that whichever of the forty members he should happen to succeed, the eulogium he was to pronounce, upon his predecessor, might always be prepared; consequently at every failure a new eulogium upon the successful member was to be composed. We then supposed him losing his portfolio on the road between St. Malo and Paris, which somebody picked up and had the contents printed. It would have been necessary, for this purpose, to make forty eulogiums in the Abbé's style, upon the forty existing members, which might have produced a very amusing and humourous effect, and the composing

them entertained us exceedingly for a long time; at the head of each was written: *In case I succeed to M. such an one.*

The abbé however found in obtaining his wishes that it was a most fatal thing for a man to have nothing left to desire; from that moment he sunk into a state of ennui and langour. For the last five years he had totally forsaken the scene of his sufferings and triumph, and retired into the country to enjoy the distinction attached there to the title of academician. At his reception into the academy he sent the speech he was to make upon the occasion to M. de Voltaire, for his approbation. The patriarch was touched with this piece of respect, and made his peace with the archdeacon which he ever after observed inviolably. From that time he was never honoured with a place in any of the little pamphlets of Ferney.

May 1770.

A letter has just appeared addressed to Mr. Clerk, a Scotchman, who served as brigadier-general in the British troops sent to the assistance of Portugal during the last war. The author of the letter, another English officer, served under him in quality of aide-de-camp, and it is to be presumed, remained in Portugal after the conclusion of peace. General Clerk then travelled over Spain and came to Paris where he continued for a long time. He is a man of great vivacity but a great talker, and even fatiguing by the trick he has of perpetually crying *hum?*

so that he has the air of being constantly asking questions, yet he never waits for an answer. Notwithstanding this, he and I suited each other vastly well, and there is nobody but Madame Geoffrin, who cannot do without a great variety of persons and things, and who knows not how to rest for any length of time upon the same object, that can, even at this day, think of General Clerk without feeling a strong emotion. It was the Baron d'Holbach who first introduced this agreeable visitant to Madame Geoffrin; after the usual compliments and sitting for about half an hour, the Baron rose to depart. The General, instead of following the person by whom he had been introduced, as is customary at a first visit, remained. Madame Geoffrin asked him if he frequented the theatres much? Very seldom.—The public walks?—Very little.—If he went much to Court?—Nobody could go less.—How then do you pass your time?—When I am in a house which I find agreeable I converse and remain there.—At these words Madame Geoffrin turned pale; it was six o'clock in the evening, and she thought, that, perhaps at ten Mr. Clerk would still *find her house agreeable and remain there;* this idea gave her a perfect ague fit. Chance at length brought M. d'Alembert; Madame Geoffrin persuaded him after a while, that he was not well and had better go home, whither the general would attend him. The latter, delighted at the idea of rendering any service to M. d'Alembert, said that his carriage was perfectly at his service, he should only

want it in the evening to carry him home. These words were like a thunder-stroke to Madame Geoffrin, who found that she could not any way get rid of her Scotchman, whatever changes took place among her guests for the evening; they came and went, but he still persisted in remaining stationary. To this day she cannot speak of the General's visit with composure; when she did get rid of him she took effectual means to prevent the repetition of such visits.

I could never persuade her that the General really was a man suited to polished society. I cannot, indeed, in justice accuse him of failing in attention to any one except his horses; he used to order his carriage to come for him at half after four to houses where he had dined, and the poor animals were commonly kept waiting there, even in the middle of winter, till midnight without ever stirring from the spot.

But we have wandered as far from our Portuguese history as from the happy sepulchres of Moukden. Since this is the case, we shall not wander much farther from the mark in trespassing another moment to give an anecdote of the celebrated David Garrick. General Clerk, one day, in company with this illustrious actor, made a long harangue to prove that the enthusiasm of the English, for Shakespeare, was only a matter of fashion and religion; that nobody in fact understood or admired his writings; but that Garrick, by his transcendent genius in acting, had rendered him the

national idol. Garrick, a great admirer of Shakespeare, and naturally full of vivacity and impatience, contained himself as well as he could for a long time, but at length rose up, and taking the general eagerly by the hand, said: *I promise you, upon my honour, General, that I will never in my life presume to talk about war.*

But it is time to hear what the aid-de-camp, who remained in Portugal, has to say.

LETTER *from Mr. Shaw Groset, Lieutenant Colonel, to Mr. Clerk, Brigadier General in the service of his Britannic Majesty.*

Elvas December 5, 1769.

" A very singular event, my general, has just " happened in this neighbourhood. The king, as " you know, has passed some time at Villaviciosa, " one of his hunting seats, four leagues from hence. " Last Sunday, his Majesty took a ride according " to his usual custom; a man, in the habit of a " peasant, with a great stick in his hand, waited at " one of the gates of the park through which the " court was to pass, when he had the inconceivable " audacity to strike at the king. His Majesty " pushed his horse towards him, and said: *Are* " *you mad?* At this moment, some of the attend- " ants observing what passed, hastened to the King's " assistance, but the man would not suffer himself " to be disarmed without resistance. The Count " de Prado, one of the gentlemen of the King's " chamber, received, in the scuffle, two or three

" violent blows on the head. The whole court
" soon assembled round the man, and he would
" have been torn to pieces, had not the King cried
" out: *Do not kill him, but carry him before Don*
" *Louis d'Acunha, one of the Secretaries of State.*
" When the man was examined, they asked him
" who he was, and what could have induced him to
" commit so rash an action?—He answered, that
" he was an old soldier of the reformed religion,
" that the King owed him eight years of arrears of
" his pay, several uniforms, and a little mule which
" had been taken from him by force; that he had
" remitted a requisition to the King, without ob-
" taining any answer, and had presented a petition
" himself to his Majesty equally without success.
" This event, my general, will no doubt appear as
" inconceivable to you as it does to me. The man
" served, formerly in a regiment of artillery, in the
" garrison where you commanded, and has always
" passed for a person of a very determined charac-
" ter. He says, he knows very well that he shall
" be put to death."

Death has just deprived us of two solitary virgins, of the royal Academy of Music, vulgarly called the Opera. They had long been dead to the stage, and their old age was honourably supported by the fruits of their youthful labours. The names of Camargo and Carton will be eternally celebrated in the commemorations of the Opera. Mademoiselle Camargo, sister to Cupis Violon, known by a

thousand brilliant adventures behind the scenes, is immortalized at the theatre as the foundress of that stile of dancing with pirouettes, which has been brought in our days, to such perfection by Mademoiselle Allard. Camargo was the first woman who ventured to shorten her petticoats, so as to give amateurs an opportunity of passing their judgment upon the legs of the female dancers. Though this fashion has since been almost universally adopted, it occasioned, at the time, a very dangerous schism. The Jansenists, of the pit, cried out heresy and scandal, and would not suffer the shortened petticoats; but the Molinists, on the contrary, contended strenuously that this innovation carried us nearer to the primitive church, which was revolted at seeing pironettes encumbered by the length of the petticoats. The Sorbonne of the Opera held a great many sittings before they could decide which of the contending parties adhered to the orthodox doctrine; but at length decided in favour of the short petticoat adherents, with a clause, however, that no female dancer should be permitted to come upon the stage without drawers. This decision has since become a fundamental article of discipline, by the general consent of all the ruling powers of the Opera.

I had the good fortune, upon my arrival in France, to find Carmargo still upon the stage, though she was in the autumn of her career, indeed drawing towards the winter. She has lived since she quitted the theatre, in a peaceable and honourable

retreat, surrounded by half a dozen dogs, and visited constantly by one friend whom she retained to the last from among her thousand and one lovers; her dogs are all bequeathed to him. He made a magnificent funeral for her, and every body admired the white ornaments, symbols of virginity, to which persons who have never been married, have a right at their interment. Since Camargo quitted the stage, the art of dancing, in all its branches, has made such a rapid progress, that her agility, which, at that time was thought so extraordinary, would now, by the side of Mademoiselle Allard and others, obtain only a moderate share of admiration. To have their names descend to posterity, it is necessary that a female dancer should have lived in the age of shortened petticoats.

As to Mademoiselle Carton, she remained to the decline of life in the inferior station of a chorus-singer, but she acquired herself a distinguished name, by her adventures in gallantry, and her witticisms. She was a woman of light character, but eminent for her vivacity and sallies of wit, so that she was most agreeable society to men. The illustrious Count Saxe was among the number of her conquests; she followed him to the famous camp of Muhlberg, in Saxony, where she had the honour of supping in company with two kings, Augustus the second of Poland, and Frederick William, of Prussia, and the princes, their sons, one of whom has since made no little noise in the world. Carton, after this brilliant adventure, re-

turned to Paris, where she continued to scream in the chorusses, at the Opera, as before. She has been replaced in the department of uttering smart repartees, by Sophy Arnoud, who has besides contrived to charm upon the stage, by the gracefulness of her figure and her fine action, though singing, without a voice, the most soporific music in Europe. The Abbé Galiani being one day present at the Court theatre, when every body round him was in extasies at Mademoiselle Arnoud's singing, his opinion of it being asked, he answered: *It is the the finest asthma that I ever heard.*

A wretch who escaped from the galleys, and afterwards assassinated several persons in the streets of Paris, has just expatiated his crimes by the punishment of the wheel. One of those assassinated by him was M. Perrin de Chatelmont, who is since dead of his wound, after languishing nearly a month. He was the youngest of a numerous protestant family, well known in the financial department, and was about fifty years of age. I knew his uncle, a very pleasant man, who died a farmer-general, seven or eight years ago, at the age of ninety. He had passed his youth, as was then very much the fashion, chiefly in the coffee-houses of Paris, among all the principal *beaux-esprits* of the time, and is mentioned in the famous couplets of Jean Baptiste Rousseau, for which a criminal action was brought against him. This old man is always cited, as having been attached to the pro-

testant faith, notwithstanding that, when I knew him, he had long outwardly adopted a system of neutrality. Though the possessor of several millions, and endowed with much acuteness of mind, he still retained the utmost simplicity of manners. His two grand-daughters carried their wealth into two families of great distinction, one having married a Langeron, and the other a Brienne. His collateral descendants, who all enjoy pretty fortunes, like their uncle, have adopted an outward shew of neutrality or rather of conforming to the established religion, except the poor Chatelmont, who was recently assasinated; he always remained a zealous protestant. His brothers enjoy their fortunes in a very respectable manner, living genteelly; he himself employed his worldly goods as a man whose mind was entirely set upon much higher objects, who regarded the present life but as a pilgrimage, and who thought only of pursuing the strait road to his true country. He never would allow himself a carriage, restraining himself, in all respects, to mere necessaries, and giving away the rest of his fortune in charity; he had a very long list of pensioners, who lose by his death, their principal support. I have mentioned him here, thus particularly, chiefly for the purpose of introducing his reply to the assassin, when he was obliged to permit his being brought to his bed-side to be confronted with him. The wretch having attributed his crime to being in the utmost extremity of want: *Unhappy man*, said Chatelmont,

why did you not come to me, I would have put you upon my pension list.

M. Colardeau has just published the first *Night of Young*, translated into French verse. In this, as in his other works, the author displays a great talent for versification. Among all our young poets, M. de la Harpe and M. Colardeau can alone be cited as having any idea of harmony, of that sweetness of versification which disposes the heart insensibly to a soft and tender melancholy; of that imitative poetry which, by I know not what secret charm, establishes a connection between such a sensation of the soul and such a selection of words or succession of sounds.

Young's Night Thoughts enjoy a high reputation in England, and indeed over all Europe. I have heard that there is a German translation of this celebrated work, which is itself a chef-d'œuvre, but I am not acquainted with it. A certain M. Letourneur, last year, gave us a French translation which M. Colardeau, doubtless as wishing to shew great courtesey to his rival, says, has met with distinguished success; for my part, I can only say, *let me die if ever I heard it mentioned by any one.* This style of writing can never succeed in France, we are not serious and thoughtful enough for it; we cannot spare the time necessary to be affected by it: another objection which I have is the kind of incertitude in which it constantly keeps the reader. We see in Young and in

writers of a similar cast, rather a heated brain, an overstrained and wild imagination, than a heart really and deeply affected. One does not know precisely of what he complains, what are the causes of his sorrow; one does not recognize the objects of his grief, although he is recurring to them at every moment; in short, there is throughout the work too much of bells, too many tombs, too many phantoms, too many songs and funereal cries; a simple and natural expression of true grief, would produce an infinitely more powerful effect than all these forced images. The object is to cause my tears to flow, not to terrify me like a child, by images frightful and horrible in their appearance, which can only make a passing impression upon the soul, and can never produce any lasting sensation.

June 1770.

The Baron de Zurlauben, captain of the regiment of Swiss guards, which his father commanded for so many years, and a member of the Royal Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres, has taken advantage of the Dauphin's marriage with the Archduchess Maria Antonietta, youngest daughter of Maria Theresa, to publish *Genealogical Tables of the august houses of Austria and Lorraine, and their alliances with the august house of France; preceded by a memoir respecting the Counts of Hapsburg, from whom the house of Austria is descended;* a volume containing between three and four hundred pages. At the end of these tables will be found the genealogy

of that branch of the house of Lorraine, which has been established more than two hundred years in France, and which once aspired to snatch from the house of Bourbon, the sceptre of one of the finest countries in Europe. The fate of this younger branch of the house of Lorraine, is to excite, at the present moment, the eager attention of the whole French nation; and we have just been witness to an extraordinary contest, occasioned by the festivities celebrated in honour of the Dauphin's marriage. Happily, every age has its peculiar character, and if, two hundred years ago, the crown of France was disputed between the house of Bourbon and the princes of Lorraine, at present the princes of that house have only had to dispute with the nobles and grandees of the country, upon the subject of a minuet.

A few days before the marriage took place, a rumour was spread, that Mademoiselle de Lorraine, daughter to the Countess de Brienne, and sister to the Prince de Lambesc, was to dance her minuet at the dressed ball given on the occasion, immediately after the princes and princesses of the blood, the king having granted her this distinction at an audience given by him to the Count de Mercy, ambassador from the emperor and empress-queen. Although it is not by any means the object of these pages to enter into the etiquettes of a court ball, as this particular one affords matter not irrelevant to a philosophical mind, I shall venture to devote a little time to it; the rather, as every thing that

characterises the public feeling of a court, a nation, or an age, is always an interesting matter of speculation.

The news of the proposed minuet of Mademoiselle de Lorraine, caused the utmost fermentation among the dukes and peers, who, on this occasion, enlisted in their cause, all the great nobles of the kingdom. It was established, among them, as an incontestible principle, that there could be no intermediate rank between the princes of the blood and the great nobles; and that, consequently, Mademoiselle de Lorraine could not have any rank at court, distinct from that of the women of quality who had been presented. The Archbishop of Rheims, the first ecclesiastical peer of the realm, being indisposed, the nobles attended at the Bishop of Noyon's, the second ecclesiastical peer, and brother to Marshal Broglio. A memorial was framed, which was to be presented to the king; the dukes and peers, in signing it, left vacant spaces between their signatures, in order that the great nobles might sign pell-mell, without distinction of titles and rank. The Bishop of Noyon was himself charged with presenting this important document to the King; and it was said publicly, that if his Majesty's answer should not be favourable, all the women of quality were determined to find themselves suddenly taken ill, and not one would dance at the ball.

No sooner did the rumour begin to circulate that such a memorial had been presented, than the

wits set to work, and put it into verse in a manner not devoid of point and reasoning. Independent of the absurdity of seeing a reverend prelate preside at deliberations respecting a minuet, and direct the steps of the French nobles upon such a subject, the poet had introduced, among the names of some ancient and illustrious houses, those of two grandees of the monarchy, of a very recent date. Though this might have the air of a licence on the part of the poet, yet it is believed to be a fact, that the name of the Marquis de Villette, son to a treasurer extraordinary in the war department, who has only been distinguished hitherto by some very indifferent efforts of the pen, and a sufficient portion of the wildness of youth, appeared to this memorial, by the side of the ancient and illustrious names of Beaufremont, Clermont and Montmorency. The descendants of the Marquis, if ever he has any, will, no doubt, think themselves much obliged to him, and will in future, say with pride, that one of their ancestors signed the celebrated memorial respecting the minuet at the marriage of Louis the Fifteenth's grandson, with all the peers and great nobles of the realm; our name must, therefore, be considered from that time, as one of the first rank and distinction. They may, indeed, say farther, that at the ball on the marriage of the Dauphin, in 1770, a Villette contended for precedence with the princes of the house of Lorraine.

Three or four days after receiving the memorial, and two days before the ball, his Majesty was

pleased to give an answer, composed by himself, and written with his own hand, to the following effect:—"The ambassador of the Emperor and "the Empress-Queen, in an audience which he "had of me, requested me, on the part of his "masters, to confer some particular mark of dis- "tinction upon Mademoiselle de Lorraine on the "present occasion of my grandson's marriage with "the Archduchess Antonietta. The order of dancing "at the ball, being the only thing which cannot lead "to any consequences, since the choice of the "dancers, both male and female, depends entirely "on my pleasure, without any distinction of place, "excepting as far as concerns the princes and "princesses of my blood, who cannot be put into "comparison with any other Frenchman whatever; "—this being the case, and not wishing for any "change or innovation in the usual practice of my "court, I expect that the grandees and nobles of "my kingdom, will give me the same proofs of "fidelity, submission and attachment that I and "my predecessors have always received from them, "and will do nothing to displease me, above all on "an occasion when I desire to evince my gratitude "for the present made to me; a present which I "hope will contribute essentially to the happiness "of my future days as well as of their own."

Although this answer evidently favours the pretensions of the grandees and nobles, they were not satisfied nor would prepare to assist at the ball; but on the day when it was to take place the greater

part of the ladies who usually dance minuets affected to walk about the apartments at Versailles quite in an undress. The agitation was extreme, and it is said that his Majesty was obliged to rouse up all his choler, to determine the ladies to dance their minuets. Thus much is certain, that the ladies had not come to a resolution till the afternoon, to submit themselves to the royal will; and that his Majesty was obliged to postpone the opening of the ball, in order to give them time to attire themselves properly. Mademoiselle de Lorraine danced her minuet immediately after the princesses of the blood; but the King then made the Count d'Artois, who had previously danced according to his rank, dance another minuet with Madame de Laval, which was followed by one between the Prince de Lambesc and Madame de Duras, if I am not mistaken. Thus, in fact, the house of Lorraine lost more than it gained upon this occasion, since, in order to its prerogative being fully established and recognized without difficulty, the Prince of Lambesc and his sister ought to have danced before all the lords and ladies of the court. It is true, that in arranging the order of dancing so as to admit of any woman of quality being taken out before the Prince of Lambesc, the expedient was practised of giving her the King's grandson for a partner, whose title to dance in that place could not be disputed by any one; but this expedient was itself an innovation, because in the imperturbable hierarchy of a court ball, every one

ought to dance a minuet according to his rank and no one ought to dance a second, before all the others whose names are given in, have danced once.

Among the persons of note who have subscribed to the statue of M. de Voltaire, the name of Jean Jaques Rousseau must not be forgotten. This celebrated man being at Lyons, addressed the following letter to M. de La-Tourette, secretary to the Academy of Sciences and Belles Lettres, at Paris, to remit his contingent.

" I learn, sir, that a plan has been formed to " erect a statue to M. de Voltaire, and that all " who are known to the world by some printed " work, are permitted to be subscribers to it. I " have paid dear enough for this honour to be in " full right to claim it, and I request the favor of " you to exert your good offices to get my name " enrolled among the list of subscribers. I hope, " sir, that the kindness with which you honour me, " and the occasion on which I trespass upon it, " will make you readily pardon the liberty I take, " I salute you, sir, respectfully, and am with all " my heart."

(Signed) " ROUSSEAU."

It is said that Jean Jaques is coming shortly to Paris, and will have permission to remain there, on condition that he keeps perfectly quiet, and prints nothing. This last clause does not suit our interests. He has acted like a wise man in sub-

scribing to Voltaire's statue, and his letter on the occasion may almost be cited as a chef-d'œuvre, since he has avoided saying that he approves the thing, or that the object to whom the homage is paid is worthy of it, he says only that he claims to have a share in it, and thinks that he has a right to do so. I like this manner of revenging himself, but I do not like apes. La Beaumelle, who is come to Paris after a stay of fifteen years in Languedoc, for the purpose, it is said, of printing a translation of Tacitus, was desirous of imitating Rousseau: he accordingly sent his subscription to Madame Necker, and chose for the day on which he sent it, a Friday, the usual day of the philosophical meetings at that house. Madame Necker sent back the money saying, that she did not receive subscriptions, which is very true. Palissot and Freron have been excluded in due form, according to the decree of the court of peers, sitting the seventeenth of April, at Madame Necker's. If poor le Franc de Pompignan had not been such a fool, he would have revenged himself like Jean Jaques; but it is now too late, and the honor of the invention will remain always exclusively with the Genevese orator.

Paris, July 1, 1770.

The festival, celebrated by the city of Paris in honor of the Dauphin's marriage, was, before it took place, a subject of ridicule to the public, it has since become a subject of mourning to the

citizens. The provost of the merchants, M. Bignon, assisted by his sheriffs and the city counsellors combined their plans so well, upon this occasion, that the place destined for rejoicing, was converted into a field of battle, covered with dead bodies; in fact, nearly a thousand citizens perished.

The shows given at the court, had less fatal consequences than the city feasts; but they were not in general very successful, and did little honour to those by whom they were planned. The fireworks and the illumination of the park at Versailles, were the only parts of them which could be said to succeed entirely. The most remarkable things among the exhibitions at court, was the *Enchanted Tower*, a ballet, interspersed with songs, represented before the King on the twentieth of June. Madame de Villeroi having heard of the magnificent ballets given at the court of Stutgard, by M. Noverre, took it into her head to imitate them; and conceived that to carry them to perfection, nothing more was requisite than to have a parcel of French airs bawled one after the other. She collected together some hundred tunes of dances, which were interspersed with psalmodies; the whole being arranged by Dauvergne, one of the most cold and insipid composers in France, and that is saying a great deal for him. The words were composed by M. Jolliveau, who calls himself perpetual secretary of the Academy of Music, because he keeps the register of the

boxes let at the opera. The Duchess, Madame de Villeroi, took upon herself the department of genius, that is to say, the invention of the plot. An unfortunate princess is shut up by malevolent genii, in an enchanted tower; her lover destroys the charm, and delivers her: so much for the expense of genius which the piece cost her Grace. After this, the princess's deliverance is celebrated by sports and festivities; and as the Duchess had heard that on foreign stages real horses were often introduced in processions and other spectacles, she could not be satisfied without bringing horses, harnessed to cabriolets, upon the theatre at Versailles.

This ridiculous piece was hissed with general consent. The enchanted tower was a little machine of green and white oiled paper, in the midst of which, through a little gauze door, was seen the princess, Sophy Arnoud, with a white handkerchief in her hand, deploring her unhappy fate, and looking like a fœtus preserved in a bottle of spirits, such as is often to be seen in cabinets of natural history. This remark was made to Sophy herself, when the performance was concluded, on which she observed, "*That was very natural, as I was the fruit of a miscarriage of Madame de Villeroi.*" At the moment when she was to be disenchanted, the signal for the tower falling was given over and over again, but all in vain, the oiled paper was sturdy and would not level itself with the earth he two giants who guarded it, fell into

the trap laid for them, with great decorum; but one, in performing his duty, got extremely bruised; they were two soldiers of the life guard. The tower, however, would not disappear, although the princess threw her arms about in all the finest attitudes of despair, and in order to accomplish her deliverance, they were obliged, at last, to carry away the pieces of oiled paper piece-meal. It would be difficult to conceive any thing more paltry, more absurd, or more ennuyeux, than her Grace of Villeroi's piece, the *Enchanted Tower*.

The illustrious M. Legros, whose fame, in the art of dressing the ladies' hair, is spread over all Europe, lost his life on the fatal night of the thirtieth of May. He was found stifled, and near him a certain Martin, a celebrated varnisher, a descendant of the great Martin, whose name has been immortalised by his varnishes. This night has therefore, as you see, proved fatal to the arts. The wife of Legros returned to the field of the slain, about three o'clock in the morning, when some one began telling her the fate of her husband, in as tender a manner as possible: "*'Tis very well,*" said she, "*but I must feel in his pockets for the keys of the house, or else I cannot get in.*" And so saying this disconsolate widow went quietly home to her bed.

M. de Saint Lambert, who has succeeded to the Abbé Trublet's seat, in the French Academy,

delivered his speech upon the occasion on the twenty-third of last month, at a public sitting of the members. This speech traces rapidly the history of French literature, from its commencement to the present time. It was well received at its delivery, but has been much pulled to pieces since it was printed. I own that this severity appears to me unjust; the composition is not sublime, but much worse have been spoken in this august assembly; besides it is agreed, at all times, that the whole matter hangs upon a few ingenious and well turned phrases.

M. de Saint Lambert is reproached with having praised every thing and praised too much, but this is the very spirit of the institution, and the author ought not to be called to account for it. A vessel of incense was given him at the door of the Academy, on condition that he should make a proper use of it, and he has directed it admirably both with back strokes towards the founders, and with front ones to the present academical noses. Independently of the illustrious president de Montesquieu and the great patriarch of Ferney, who have most assuredly an incontestible right to our utmost homage, and to the gratitude of all ages, the Abbé de Condillac, M. Thomas, M. d'Alembert and others had their ample share of eulogium. I know not by what fatality M. de Saint Lambert forgot M. de Buffon, who is one of the members, and I am tempted to do like a Gascon officer, who, returning from the palace, where he had

mounted guard, on a sitting of Louis the Fourteenth at the Parliament, stopped upon the Pont Neuf, before the statue of Henry the Fourth, and said to his troop: *My friends, let us salute him too, he is well worth another.* If M. de Buffon may be charged with supporting systems which are untenable, it cannot be denied but that he surveys things in general with a very philosophic eye, while the sublimity of his ideas, and the grandeur of his style and colouring, must insure him a place among the first writers of the age. How could any one pass over M. de Buffon in silence, when he had the courage to praise the Abbé Condillac? It is true that the orator promised us a work of the latter upon education, but till it appears, and I have read it, I would not take upon myself to pronounce it worthy of our admiration and gratitude.

If the Abbé Trublet could know all the handsome things that his generous successor has said of him, as a literary character, he would never be able to rest quietly in his grave, but would hasten with the utmost speed to Paris, to pour out his heart in acknowledgments. I suspect that M. de Saint Lambert thinks of travelling over Germany, and has learned from Maupertuis the respect shewn by the postmasters of that country, to those who hold in esteem the works of Archdeacon Trublet. When Marmontel was received at the Academy, he went to see the director, in order to read him his speech, and communicate with him

upon the answer, according to the usual custom This director was M. Bignon, the same who in quality of provost of the merchants, gave such splendid and *fortunate* shows to the Parisians upon the Dauphin's marriage. He said to Marmontel: *I know well that I ought to have spoken with eulogium of you and your works, but I have not done it, because I was afraid of making myself enemies.* It will be recollected, that Marmontel had experienced great difficulty in getting into the Academy, because of the fatal parody of a scene in Cinna, adapted to a consultation held between the Duke d'Aumont, M. d'Argental, and Le Kain, upon the government of the French theatre—a parody which amused the public for some time, but which Marmontel was incapable of writing, though it was always ascribed to him. It was prince Louis, of Rohan, coadjutor of Strasbourg, who smoothed the way at last for Marmontel's admission, by forcing the Duke d'Aumont to declare, in strong terms, that he wished him to be elected. The prudent M. Bignon however felt, notwithstanding this declaration, that Marmontel's enemies would not be particularly delighted with hearing his eulogium, and he had not only the weakness to suppress it, but had also the imprudence to confess the truth to Marmontel himself. To this M. Bignon, the Count d'Argenson, then minister, when he obtained the place of librarian to the king, which has become almost hereditary in his family, said: *My cousin, this will afford you a charming*

opportunity for learning to read. For the rest, he is not the only person who has totally suppressed the usual eulogium, and M. de Saint Lambert might have found in the records of the Academy, more than sufficient authorities to justify him, if not for suppressing, at least for abridging very much his eulogium of the deceased Archdeacon.

His oration concluded with a frank but feeble apology for learning and philosophy, against the reproaches of irreligion, and other imputations cast upon them. The Bishop of Limoges, in answering his speech officially, as director of the Academy, complimented the Abbé Trublet in the stile that a bishop might be expected to compliment an archdeacon. The most striking passage in his address was, that he said, speaking of Fontenelle: *That celebrated man, who, having lived nearly one century, has shed a lustre over two.* Some days after his reception at the Academy, M. de Saint Lambert published a little tract, called *The Two Friends*, an *Iroquois Tale.* You would be much pleased with Erima's song. The two friends part, but there was no occasion to have made more than one throughout the tale, or else the other should not have been formed exactly in the same mould. It seems, however, difficult to be concise in telling a tale, and people addicted to narrating, would do well to bear in mind Madame Geoffrin's lesson. The Count de Coigny, one day, when dining with her, was telling stories to which there was no end,

Presently a rib of beef was served, when he drew a small knife out of his pocket to cut it, still continuing his histories. Madame Geoffrin growing quite impatient, said *My good Count, at dinner we wish for large knives and little stories.*

Jean Jaques Rousseau, whose subscription to the patriarch's statue has not given the latter all the pleasure imaginable, has been at Paris for a month past, with his housekeeper, Madame Lavasseur, who is at length become his wife. He has quitted his Armenian dress and resumed the costume of France. On this occasion an impertinent tale has been put into circulation, which throws a slander upon the virtue of Madame Jean Jaques, and still more upon the taste of him who may have sinned with her. It is said, that her husband, having caught her in the very fact of *scandalum magnatum*, with a monk, instantly quitted the Armenian dress, saying *That he had, till then, wished to distinguish himself in his external appearance from other men, as he considered himself really somewhat out of the common stamp; he however found that he had been in an error, that he was, in fact, quite of the ordinary class.* I believe that the hope of being permitted to return to Paris, had more influence in this change of dress than any frolicks of Madame Rousseau. The Armenian would never have obtained permission to re-appear in the metropolis, but the Attorney-General has been prevailed upon to permit Jean Jaques in the

French costume to shew himself. The condition, however, that he should not write, or at least not print any thing, has been rigidly exacted.

The return of this singular man to a city in which he has passed the greatest part of his life, and which alone, of the whole universe is suited to him, has furnished, for some days, a sufficient topic of conversation for Paris. He has shewn himself several times at the Regency coffee-house, in the place of the Palais Royal, and his presence has drawn thither prodigious crouds; the populace even assembled in troops to see him pass. When thus assembled, they were asked what had brought them together, to which they answered, that they came to see Jean Jaques; when interrogated who this Jean Jaques was they answered, that they did not know, but they came to see him. The exhibition was, however, put an end to, by desiring Jean Jaques not to appear any more at the coffee-house, or in any other public place, and since that time he has kept himself more retired.

In fact, nothing more is wanting, than for some hot-brained fellow, among our counsellors of inquests, and requests, to denounce poor Jean Jaques, when the Attorney General would be obliged to prosecute him, upon the decree, for the arrest of his person, that being still in force against him, and he would then be obliged to go anew into exile; in avoiding too great publicity he may perhaps not be driven to this necessity. He goes much into society, particularly among the fair sex,

and having thrown off the *bear's skin*, with the Armenian habit, he is become mild and gallant. He also frequents Sophy Arnoud's suppers, where he is among the elect of the *petits-maîtres*; Rulhiere seems to be the person he has chosen for his *cicerone*. As to his occupations, having been obliged to quit the pen in one instance, he has availed himself of it in another, and has resumed the profession of a copyist of music. He allows that he was a bad copyist formerly, because, he says, that he had then the mania of writing books; but now, that this mania is over, and his common sense is returned, he asserts, that he has no equal in the art: he must, he says, make fifteen hundred livres a year by it, to be at his ease. He has received many visits of curiosity; among this description of visitors is the Prince de Ligne, of the Low Countries, who is reported to be a very amiable and pleasant man. Some days after his visit, the Prince wrote the following letter to Rousseau but it has not been honoured with the approbation of the Parisians, as they do not find it natural, and pretention to wit is a malady for which no allowance is made here.

LETTER to *M. Rousseau.*

" I am Sir, the person who came to visit you " the other day. I have not been a second time, " though I die to repeat my visit, but you do not " love the assiduous, or their assiduities. Think " of what I proposed to you; in my country

" nobody can read, and you will neither be admired " nor persecuted. You shall have the key of my " books and of my gardens, and you shall see me, " or see me not, as you please; you shall have a " small country-house, a quarter of a league from " mine, where you can plant and sow, and do " whatever you please.

" Jean Baptiste* and his wit are come to die " in Flanders, but he only made verses; let Jean " Jaques and his genius come to live there; let " it be with me, or rather with himself, that he " continues *vitam impendere vero.* If you would " be still more at liberty, I have a little spot of " ground which does not depend on any body, " where the air is pure and the heavens are serene, " and it is only fourscore leagues from hence. " There are no archbishops or parliaments there, " but the best sheep in the world.

" At the other habitation which I offer you, " I have bees; if you love them they shall remain " there, if not, they shall be removed; their repub- " lic will treat you better than that of Geneva has " done, to which you do so much honour, and to " which you sought to do so much good. Like " you, I do not love thrones and dominations;

* Jean Baptiste Rousseau, the poet, who has written some good odes, but whose moral character is very equivocal. His literary merits extend no farther than these odes, notwithstanding which he has been surnamed the *Great Rousseau*, less to distinguish him from the croud of Rousseaus, than to mortify M. de Voltaire, whose enemy he was; the surname, however, became in the end, only a subject of laughter.

" you will not reign over anybody, but nobody " will reign over you. If you accept my offer, " Sir, I will conduct you myself to the *Temple of* " *Virtue*; this should be the name of your abode, " but we will not call it so: I will spare your " modesty the triumphs which it deserves. If " this does not suit you, supppose nothing to have " been said; I shall not see, but shall continue to " read and admire you, without telling you so."

August, 1770.

His Majesty the King of Prussia, having desired M. d'Alembert to fix the amount of his subscription to M. de Voltaire's statue, M. d'Alembert said *A crown, Sire, and your name.* The same night he said to all the sovereigns whose august names will honour this enterprise and consecrate it to immortality. One knows well that they might order and pay for a statue without ruining themselves; but to associate their names in this tribute, with those who first thought of it, to permit that theirs should be confounded with those of simple citizens, is a homage paid to the man, who, of all others, in his age, has deserved best of humanity,—is to give the noblest encouragement to letters and to virtue that they have ever received. At Paris, Marshal Richelieu was the first who desired to be admitted into the Court of Peers, that he might be a sharer in this enterprise. He sent fifty louis to the Abbé Raynal, who has obtained the dignity of a count and peer of the court for several

works. This ecclesiastical peer, however, solicited the Marshal to put himself more upon a level with the other subscribers by reducing his subscription, and it was accordingly reduced to twenty louis.

The court has agreed to suspend their deliberations upon a question proposed, where the statue of the patriarch should be placed. I suggested the French theatre as one of the temples whence the lessons and oracles of this great man had been sounded forth to all Europe; the statue might be offered to the King's company, to stand in the new saloon which they propose to build, as an object of veneration to the faithful. I also suggested, as a still better idea, to have the statue executed in bronze, and placed below the equestrian statue of Henry the Fourth, on the Pont-Neuf. This idea appeared to me so much the less to be despised, as in giving the head and eyes a direction towards this best of monarchs, the poet would be represented as contemplating his hero with ardour and enthusiasm. The court contented itself however with a shrug of the shoulders, and declared it had its reasons for persisting in suspending all deliberations upon the subject for the present. In the mean time, the French Academy has been pleased to take to itself the approbation which the King of Prussia gives manifestly to the Court of Peers, since it is to them exclusively that the honour of the plan belongs, and half of them, at least, are not members of the Academy. M. d'Alembert having communicated the King's letter

to some of his brother Academicians, they have requested, through him, his Majesty's permission to inscribe this letter in the registers of the Academy, as a glorious monument to a literary society, It is true, that the Court of Peers, being self-erected, has not yet proceeded so far as to keep registers, but if his Majesty consents to the publication of this letter, it will certainly be preserved in the records of immortality.

We have just lost the creator of chymistry in France. William Francis Rouelle, apothecary and demonstrator in chymistry, at the Royal Botanic Gardens, a member of the Royal Academies of Sciences, at Paris, and at Stockholm, died the beginning of this month after a long and painful illness. Rouelle was a man of great genius without cultivation; before him, nothing was known in France, but the principles of Lemery: it was he who introduced the chymistry of Stahl, and made known, in his country, a science of which it was wholly ignorant, but in which such rapid advances had been made by a number of great men in Germany. Rouelle was not able to read all their writings, but his native genius was sufficient to lead him on, almost without assistance, so that he ought, in justice, to be considered as the founder of the science in France. His name will, however, soon be forgotten, since he has not written any thing, and those who have written upon the subject, and who are all his scholars,

have not, in their writings, rendered that homage to their master which was his due; they have found it more expedient to take to themselves principles and discoveries which they held from him. Rouelle, for this reason, quarrelled with all those among his disciples who wrote upon chymistry. He revenged himself for their ingratitude by the reproaches with which he loaded them in his public and private lectures, and it was always known beforehand, that, at such a lecture, the portrait of Malouin would be given, at such a one, the portrait of Macquer, in colours, suited to the indignation of the lecturer. They were, according to him, ignorant blockheads, barbers, apprentices, *plagiarists*. This last appellation had, in his mind, a signification so odious that he could say nothing beyond it: he used to apply it even to the greatest criminals, and to express the deep horror he felt at Damien's attack upon the King, he could find nothing worse to say of the culprit than that he was a *plagiarist*. His indignation at the plagiarisms, which had been practised upon himself, grew, at length, to a sort of mania; he always thought himself plundered, and when the works of Pott, of Lehmann, or any other great German chymist were translated, in which he found ideas analogous to his own, he asserted that he had been pillaged by them.

Rouelle was, by nature, extremely petulant; his ideas were confused, and without precision, and it required a good head to follow him in his

lectures; he spoke with great eagerness, but incorrectly, and was accustomed to say, of the Academy, that there was nothing there but *fine talking*. Notwithstanding these defects, his views were always profound, and those of a great original genius; but he sought to veil them over to his auditors as much as his natural impetuosity would allow him. He commouly was very diffuse in explaining his ideas, but even when he had been the most so he would conclude with saying: *but this is among my arcana, which I do not disclose to any body*. Sometimes one of his pupils would rise and repeat to him, in a whisper, all that he had himself been saying aloud; Rouelle then believed that the disciple had discovered his *arcanum* by his own penetration, and would entreat him not to divulge what had been just demonstrated by himself to two hundred auditors.—He was so uncommonly absent, that exterior objects had scarcely any existence to him. When he was talking he fidgetted upon his chair like one possessed, threw himself backwards and forwards, flourished his arms, perhaps gave his neighbour a kick with his foot, or tore his ruffles without having the least idea of what he was about. One day, being in a circle where there were a number of ladies, he untied his garter, drew his stocking down over his shoe, scratched his leg for some time with both his hands, and then replaced his stocking and garter perfectly insensible all the time that he was guilty of any breach of decorum. At his lectures, he

usually brought with him a brother and a nephew to assist in his experiments; but, as his assistants were not always there, he would cry *nephew why nephew!* the nephew however not coming, he would go himself to the laboratory, always continuing his lecture as if he had still been with his auditors, and, at his return, had commonly finished the demonstration he was then about, concluding according to his usual custom, with: *Yes, Gentlemen.* One day, in the absence of his brother and nephew, being left to perform the experiments by himself, he said: *Gentlemen you see the cauldron upon this brazier.—Well, if I were to cease stirring a single moment, an explosion would ensue, which would blow us all into the air.* This was no sooner said than he forgot to stir, and his prediction was accomplished; the explosion took place with a horrible crash, all the windows of the laboratory were broke to pieces, and two hundred auditors whirled away into the garden; fortunately, no serious injury was received by any body, the greatest violence of the explosion having been in the direction of the chimney; the demonstrator himself was quit with the loss only of his wig. It is, indeed, almost a miracle, that, making his experiments, as he very commonly did, by himself, because he would not let even his brother into his *arcana,* he was not blown into the air by his heedlessness hundreds of times. By inhaling, however so perpetually the most noxious exhalations, without taking any precau-

tions to counteract their effect, he, in the end, lost the use of his limbs entirely, and passed the latter years of his life in the most terrible state of suffering.

Rouelle was a thoroughly honest man, but with a character so rugged and uncultivated, he could neither know or practise the established usages of society, and as it was easy to prejudice him against any one, and impossible ever to remove a prejudice once imbibed, he often in his lectures, laid around him every way in the most unmerciful manner; it was not, therefore, surprizing that he made himself a great many enemies. He could not admire the physics or the systems of M. de Buffon, and was little affected with the beauty of his style to which he applied his usual epithet of *fine talking*; some part of every course of his lectures was therefore, regularly devoted to abusing this illustrious academician. He had also conceived a grudge against Dr. Bordeu, a physician of considerable talents and reputation: *Yes Gentlemen*, (he would say regularly every year at some part of his lecture), *he is one of your people, a plagiarist, a smatterer who has killed my brother that you see here.* He always insisted that Bordeu had blundered exceedingly in his method of treating his brother in a severe illness he once had. Rouelle was demonstrator at the public lectures, given at the King's Botanic Garden, Dr. Bourdelin being then professor, who commonly finished his lectures with these words: *As the demonstrator will prove to*

you by his experiments. But Rouelle then, instead of proceeding to the experiments, said: *Gentlemen, all that the professor has been telling you is absurd and false, as I will prove at this moment;* and, unhappily for the professor, he was commonly as good as his word.

For the rest he was a thoroughly good Frenchman, full of patriotism and zeal for his country, loving news to the heart—when his eyes were not fixed upon a crucible. At the beginning of the last war he was hot upon commanding a fleet of flat-bottomed boats, with which he would go and burn London. He did not despair of finding the means of setting fire to the English squadrons upon the water;—this was one of his *arcana.* I met him the day after the battle of Rosbach, he was altogether in a fermentation. and seemed to walk with the utmost difficulty, *Hey! How's this, what is the matter M. Rouelle?* said I.—*I am ground to powder,* said he; *I can support it no longer; the whole Prussian cavalry has marched, this night, over my body.* He afterwards abused our generals as *plagiarists,* and I felt that this was not a moment to combat his opinion. Great political and military events affected him so strongly that he would even sometimes descant upon them in the midst of a lecture on chymistry.

Among the number of his disciples may be reckoned, not only all the able chymists that France can boast at this day, but a number of celebrated men in other classes of science. In-

dependently of his deep knowledge in chymistry he had an art which, most truly, belongs to great genius, that of leading his disciples to think. Dr. Roux, who studied under him for a long time, has always proposed to collect his papers after his death, and arrange them in such a manner as to give them all the requisite clearness and order, and then present them to the public as a treasure which had belonged to his master. He knows many of his *arcana* which will be forgotten with the name of their author if this project be not carried into execution.

Last year a miserable pamphlet was published, to which so little attention was paid that I never could learn who was the author; it has however been just now re-printed, and it is therefore to be supposed that it has had some sale either in the country or abroad. It has fallen into the hands of M. Diderot, and as the most wretched trash may sometimes give occasion to excellent reflections, I cannot suppress those that he has thrown together upon this occasion.

OBSERVATIONS upon a pamphlet, entitled, GARRICK, *or the English Actors; a work containing reflections upon the dramatic art, upon the art of representation, and the performance of the actors; with notes, historical and critical upon the different theatres of London and Paris; translated from the English.*

A work written in an obscure, distorted and bombast stile, full of very common place ideas. I

will take upon me to say, that after reading it, a good actor will not be better, nor a middling one less middling.

It is nature alone which can give the exterior qualities, as figure and countenance, voice good sense, judgement, discernment; it is by the study of the great masters, by the practice of the theatre by industry, by reflexion, that the gifts of nature are to be brought to perfection. The player who confines himself to imitation may do every thing passably, there will be nothing to commend or condemn in his play: the actor of nature and genius is sometimes detestable, sometimes excellent. With whatever severity an actor may be criticised on his first appearance, he will sooner or later find his exact level; hisses can only put down the feeble and inert.

And how can nature, without art, form a great actor, since, rigorously speaking, nothing upon the stage is according to nature, and dramatic pieces are all by convention composed according to a certain established system. Or how can a character be played in the same manner by two different actors, since even in the most clear, the most concise, the most energetic writer, the words can never be the indisputable signs of one particular idea, sentiment or thought.

Attend to the observation which follows, and then conceive how easy it is for a man in making use of the same expressions to say very different things. The example which I am going to cite is a sort of

prodigy, it is the complete work itself which we are now examining. Let it be read by a French actor he will agree that every thing in it is true: let it be read by an English one, and he will swear *by God* that not a word should be subtracted from it, that it is the gospel of the stage. At the same time my friend, since there is nothing in common between the manner of writing tragedy and comedy in England and in France;—since, according to the opinion even of Garrick, he who knows perfectly well how to perform a scene in Shakespeare, would not be able to utter a single syllable in a scene of Racine with the declamation proper to be employed, and *vice versa*;—it is evident, this being the case, that the French and English actor, who both agree in the truth of the principles laid down by the author in question, cannot annex the same ideas to what he says, and that consequently the technical language of their trade must have something in it very vague, must have a very considerable latitude; how else could two men of diametrically opposite modes of thinking upon the subject acknowledge its truth. We must remain more than ever attached to your maxim, *Nil explicare.—Do not explain yourself if you wish to be understood.**

* This has been, for a long time, one of the first of my aphorisms, and every day confirms to me its utility and wisdom. But does not the employing the same words to express such different ideas upon any subject proceed rather from general principles, being a sort of patron which is the same in any dress. Ask an old

The work entitled *Garrick*, &c. must then have two very distinct senses, both included under the same exterior signs, one at London, another at Paris; and these signs must present both senses so appropriately that the translator has been deceived, since in thrusting into his translation the names of our French actors by the side of English ones, he no doubt believed that what his original said of the former was equally applicable to the latter. I do not know of any work where there are so many palpable contradictions as in this; words have surely one meaning at Paris and a directly opposite one at London.

For the rest, I may be in the wrong, but my ideas differ very much from those of this author upon the principal qualities requisite in a great actor. According to my idea he must have a strong judgment, he must be a cool and tranquil observer of human nature, he must have much penetration, but no sensibility, or, which, is the same thing, must have the art of imitating every thing, and an equal aptitude at catching all sorts of characters. If he had great sensibility it would be impossible for him to play the same character a dozen times successively, with the same fire and the

partizan of Lulli's music, and a man of taste who passionately admires the music of Gretry, what are the characteristics of good music, they will both make use of the same terms in the definition they give, but in the application, one will deny that the music which charms the other, has any of the characters that have been described.

same success. Eager and spirited at the first representation he would be exhausted and cold as marble by the third; instead of which, the reflective imitator of nature will, the first time of his performance, be an imitator of himself, while at the tenth time, far from his play being more feeble, he will have improved himself by the many new reflections which practice and experience have enabled him to make, and his audience will be constantly more and more satisfied with him.

What confirms me the more in my opinion is, the inequality of those actors who act from the soul. Uniformity is a thing never to be expected from them, their play will be alternately powerful or feeble, full of fire or cold, insipid or sublime; they will fail to-morrow in the same character in which they have excelled to-day, and excel to-morrow where they failed the most lamentably yesterday. Instead of this constant instability those who play from reflection, from studying human nature, from imitation, from imagination, from memory, are the same at all times, are at all times equally perfect; every thing with them is duly measured, duly prepared, their warmth has its beginning, its continuation, its end. We hear the same accents, see the same positions, the same movements, or if there be any difference in their acting it is always to the advantage of the last performance; they are perfect mirrors, always ready to shew the objects, and always with the same

truth and precision. Like, the poet, they are always drawing from the inexhaustible sources of nature, instead of which, if they depended upon themselves alone for their supplies, they would soon be entirely drained.

Can any acting be more perfect than that of Mademoiselle Clarion? — Follow her, however, observe her accurately, and you will soon be convinced that she has all the details of her acting by heart, as perfectly as all the words she is to repeat. She undoubtedly first conceived, in her mind, a model to which she studied exactly to conform herself, and this model was undoubtedly the most lofty, the most grand, the most perfect that she could conceive. But the model is not herself; if it were so, how poor, how feeble, would be her imitation. When by deep study she has approached this ideal model the nearest that she is able, all is done. I have no doubt that she feels exceedingly tormented within herself in the first moments of her study; but these moments past, her soul is calm, she resumes her self-possession; she rehearses almost without any internal emotion, every thing is arranged, determined in her mind; carelessly extended upon her easy chair with her eyes shut, she might, in following her part in silence, by memory alone, hear herself, see herself upon the stage, and judge exactly of the effect she produced. The case is otherwise with her rival Dumesnil, she comes before the audience without knowing what she shall say; for three-fourths of

the time she does not know what she says, but the rest is sublime.

And why should the actor differ from the statuary, the painter, the orator, or the musician? —It is not in the ardour of the first stroke that the characteristic features present themselves to their minds; it is when they are become cool and tranquil, in moments wholly unexpected, when they are suspended, immoveable, between human nature and the object they have sketched; then casting their eyes alternately, with fixed attention, upon the one and the other, the beauties which they shed over their works are much more certain and more secure of success, than those which have been hastily imagined, in the first moment of eagerness. The violent man, the man who appears beside himself, cannot charm us; that is the province of the man who has a perfect command of himself. The great dramatic poets, above all, are assiduous spectators of what passes round about them; they seize every thing which strikes them, and store it up in their memories; and it is from those registers that so many sublime passages in their works are drawn. The eager, the violent, the men of deep sensibility, exhibit themselves upon the great theatre; they are the personages of the drama, but they do not enjoy it themselves; it is from them that the man of genius collects his materials. The great poets, the great actors, perhaps in general all the great imitators of nature of every kind, endowed with fine imaginations, with

excellent judgment, with nicety of discernment, with exquisite taste, will be then, according to my theory, the beings who have the least of what is understood by the term sensibility; they have too many objects to fix their attention, they are too much occupied with observing and imitating to be deeply affected within themselves. Observe women; they surpass us, certainly, very far in sensibility; what comparison between them and us in moments of passion? but as much as we must yield to them when they act, so much must they remain below us when they imitate. In the great theatre to which I always recur, that of the world, all with heated brains are upon the stage, the men of genius are in the pit; the former are the madmen, the latter, those who amuse themselves with copying their extravagancies, are called the wise; it is the observing eye of the sage which seizes the ridiculous features of so many different persons, who paints them, and afterwards makes them laugh at the picture, the features of which, they themselves, perhaps, furnished.

But let these truths be demonstrated ever so clearly, the actors would never subscribe to them; it is their secret: sensibility is so estimable a quality, that they will never confess that they can, or ought to do without it, if they would excel in their trade.

But how? perhaps I shall be asked, is it possible that those accents so mournful, so plaintive, which seem torn from the heart of that mother, and which agitate mine so feelingly, is it possible I say that

they can be produced by any thing but the feeling of the sentiment itself?—Are they not the effect of real grief?—Not in the least. The proof is, that they are measured, that they make part of a system of declamation, that they are submitted to a law of unity, that they concur in the solution of a given problem; it is that they do not fulfil all the conditions proposed, but after long study; it is, that in order to be produced in their proper places, they have been rehearsed twenty times; it is that the actor then heard himself; it is that he still hears himself at the moment when he pierces your soul; and that all his talent consists, not in resigning himself to his sensibility, as you suppose, but in imitating all the exterior signs of sentiment, so exactly, that you are deceived by them. The cries of his grief are noted down in his memory, the gestures of his despair are prepared beforehand; he knows the precise moment when his tears will begin to flow. That tremulousness in his voice, those broken words, that shuddering in his limbs, that tottering of his knees,—it is all, all, pure imitation, a lesson learnt beforehand, of which he is perfectly conscious at the moment he executes it, and of which he will have a perfect recollection for a long time after; one which never touched his soul, and has no other effect upon him, but like other exercises, to exhaust the body. The sock or buskin thrown aside, his voice is extinct, he feels extreme fatigue, he changes his linen, and goes to bed; but no affliction, no trouble, no de-

pression of the soul, remains with him. It is you, messieurs, the auditors, who carry away these impressions; the actor is weary, and you are sad: the case is, that he has been in strong exercise without any feeling of the heart; you have felt strongly, without exercise. If these things were otherwise, the life of an actor would be one of the most wretched in the creation: happily for us and for him, he is not the person he represents; if he were, his performance would be flat and awkward. *Different sensibilities which are in accord among themselves to produce the greatest effect possible!* —That makes me laugh. I, insist, then, that it is sensibility which makes so many indifferent actors; it is the want of sensibility that makes actors sublime. The tears of the actor descend, those of the man of sensibility rise; it is the interior feeling which torments incessantly the head of the man of sensibility; it is the head of the actor which conveys some transient feeling into the interior.

Have you ever reflected upon the difference between the tears excited by a tragic event, and those that are called forth by a pathetic address. One hears a fine harangue; by degrees the head is embarrassed, the feelings are moved, and at length tears flow: at the sight of a tragic event, the feelings receive a violent shock, the head is lost, and tears rush forth; the latter come suddenly, the former are gradually excited. It is this which gives so much advantage to some sudden and un-

expected stroke upon the stage, if brought on naturally, without any forced situations; it produces rapidly, the effect, which in another case, is expected for a long time: but this is a matter very difficult to be accomplished, if brought on by forced or unnatural means, the effect is wholly lost. Accents are more easily imitated than emotions, but emotions naturally given, strike much more forcibly than the most pathetic language.

Reflect, I intreat you, on what we call upon the stage, acting with truth. Is it representing things such as they really are in nature?—By no means. An unfortunate creature from the street, would there appear poor, mean, paltry; truth would in that case be nothing else but vulgarity. What then is truth?—It is the conformity of the exterior signs, of the voice, the countenance, the emotions, the actions, the speech; in a word, of every part of the acting with the ideal model given by the poet, or conceived in the head of the actor.

A woman who is unhappy, truly unhappy, weeps, and it happens, that she does not affect you; nay, worse, some trifling circumstance which disfigures her, disposes you to laugh. It is, that the accent which is natural to her, has a dissonant sound to your ears; it is, that some movement which is habitual to her in her grief, gives her, to you, a very awkward appearance. The fact is, that real passion has almost always certain grimaces and contortions peculiar to itself; and

these an artist without taste copies servilely, while the artist of real genius carefully avoids them. We wish to see a man, even under the greatest agony of mind, preserve the dignity of his character; we would have a woman fall with decency and meekness; we would have a hero die as the gladiator of old died, in the arena, amid the applauses of the amphitheatre, with a noble air, with grace, and in an elegant and picturesque attitude. Who is it that will fulfil these expectations? Is it the athlete who is disordered by his sensibility, who is overpowered by his grief, or he who by intense study, has learnt his part, who practises the severe lessons of the gymnasium, even to the last sigh? The ancient gladiator, like a great actor—the great actor, like an ancient gladiator, die not as the mass die, in their beds; they are forced to act a very different kind of death, in order to please us; and the refined spectator will feel, that the truth of the action, deprived of all preparation, is poor and little, nor accords at all with the dignity of poetry. For the rest, it is not that pure nature has not its moments of sublimity, but I conceive, that if any one is sure of preserving those moments, it must be he who has had a presentiment of them beforehand,—that it is he alone who will represent them with coolness. I will not, however, pronounce, that there may not be a sort of factitious and acquired sensibility to emotion, which may approach towards the reality; but if my opinion be asked, I would say, that I

consider this almost as dangerous as actual sensibility. It must in the long run lead the actor into monotony and make him a mannerist; this can only be avoided by possessing a head of ice.

But you will perhaps say that a number of men who display suddenly, each one after their manner, the sensibility they experience, form an extraordinary spectacle without being preconcerted. This is very true, but would not the effect have been still greater if there had been a well-arranged concert among them. Besides, you speak of a fugitive moment, and I speak of a work of art which has a certain march that it must pursue, and a certain time that it must continue. Take every one of these people separately, shew them to me isolated, one after the other, abandon them to their own movement, and you will presently see what a cacophony will result. And if to obviate this effect, you would have them rehearse together, adieu their own character, adieu their natural sensibility, and so much the better. It is the same thing as in a well-regulated community, where each one sacrifices a part of his primitive rights for the general good of the whole. Who is it then that will calculate with the greatest accuracy the exact measure of the sacrifice to be made? Most certainly the just man in society, and the man with a cool head upon the stage.

It is here the proper place to speak of the evil influence that bad associates have upon a great actor, the latter has conceived his part with gran-

deur, but he is forced to abandon the ideal model formed in his own mind, to put himself upon something like a level with the miserable block who appears with him. What then do we mean when we speak of two actors who mutually support each other?—We mean that they are two men whose models are conceived according to the just proportion of equality or subordination, required by the circumstances in which the Poet has placed them. Unless this is done, one will be too strong or the other too weak, while to avert this dissonance, the strong, who cannot elevate the weak to his height, must either from instinct or judgment sink himself to the level of his weaker partner.

In one word, at what age is a man a great actor? Is it during the fire of youth when the blood boils in the veins and the soul is set into a flame by the slightest spark, when the most trifling shock occasions a mortal commotion within?—By no means. It is after a long experience when the passions are cooled, when the soul is tranquil and the head calm. Baron, at more than sixty years of age, played the Earl of Essex, Xipharès, Brittanicus, and played them well; Mademoiselle Goussin excelled in *La Pupille* at the age of fifty. An old actor is only ridiculous when he has entirely lost his strength, or when the superiority of his talents is not sufficient to overshadow the contrast between his own age, and the youth of the character he is to personate.

Both Mademoiselle Clairon and Molé, at

their first coming on the stage played like automatons, but they afterwards became great actors. How did that happen?—Is it that they afterwards acquired soul, sensibility, feeling? If an actor or an actress were profoundly penetrated with the feelings they are to represent, as some persons suppose, would the actor be able to take a survey of the audience, or the actress be capable of smiling upon her friends behind the scenes. Once more, it is not the man who is beside himself, it is he who is cool and collected, who is master of his countenance, of his voice, of his actions, of his gestures, of every part of his play who can work upon others at his pleasure.

Garrick shews his head at a door, and in two moments I see his countenance pass rapidly from extreme joy to astonishment, from astonishment to sadness, from sadness to despair, and descend again with equal rapidity from the point at which he had arrived to that whence he parted. Is it that his soul could have experienced successively, all these passions in so short time, and executed in concert with his countenance this species of Gamut!—I cannot believe it.

Sedaine's *Philosopher without his knowledge* tottered at the first representation, and I was heartily grieved at it; at the second its success was brilliant and I was transported with joy. On the morrow I hastened to see Sedaine, the cold was extremely severe, but I went nevertheless to every place where I thought he was likely to be found.

At length I was told that he was at the very extremity of the Fauxbourg St. Antoine, and I flew thither in search of him; when we met I threw my arms round his neck, I was unable to speak, and tears streamed from my eyes; this was the man of sensibility and feebleness. Sedaine, calm and without emotion looked stedfastly at me and said, *Ah M. Diderot, how sublime you are!* this was the observer and the man of genius.

At the first representation of Ines de Castro, children were introduced and the pit thought proper to laugh. Madame Duclos, who played Ines, exclaimed, indignantly, *laugh fools if you please at the finest part of the piece.* The pit heard her and suppressed their laughter, the actress resumed her character and her tears, and the tears of the audience were soon seen to flow. How!—is it then possible to pass thus rapidly from one profound sentiment to another equally profound, from indignation to grief?—I think not; the fact was, that her indignation was real, her grief only assumed.

Quinault du Fresne played the character of Severus in Polyeuctes; he was sent by the Emperor Decius to persecute the Christians, he confides to his friend his secret sentiments upon this calumniated sect. This confidence which might cost him his life, could not be given in too low a voice: the pit judged otherwise and cried *louder! louder!* to which the actor coolly replied, *and you,*

Gentlemen, not so loud. Had he been really Severus, could he so easily in a moment have become Du Fresne? No I tell you; it is only the man who is, as collected as he no doubt was, the great actor; the actor *par excellence* who can thus at his pleasure quit and resume his mask.

An actor is desperately in love with an actress; chance brings them together in a scene of jealousy; the scene will gain if the actor be a man of moderate talents, it will loose if he be a great actor; he will be himself, and not the sublime ideal model which he had conceived of a jealous man.—I will say farther, that an excellent means of playing feebly, with littleness, is to have to play your own character. You are, for example, a hypocrite, a misanthrope; you may play a hypocrite, you may play a misanthrope and you will play them well, but you will not be any thing which the Poet had written, for he has painted hypocrisy, he has painted misanthropy, and you are an individual of the species only, probably one very much below the model which the poet had conceived.

Quinault du Fresne it will, perhaps, be said was proud by character, and he played a proud man well. And who told you that it was himself he played? Nay, even supposing it was so, who told you that nature had not made him nearly approaching to the ideal model. But Quinault du Fresne was not Orasmin, and whoever played,

or ever can play that character equal to him.* He was not the man in *Fashionable Prejudices*, yet how perfect was his representation of it. One of the most frank, the most upright, the most honest men that ever engaged in the difficult profession of an actor, Montmeni, played equally well the characters of Aristus in *La Pupille*, of Le Tartuffe, of the Village Lawyer, and of Mascarillo in the Cheats of Scapin. I have seen him in them all, and to my great astonishment his countenance was perfectly adapted to every character. He could not have these different countenances naturally, for nature gave him bnt one, and that was his own, the others then were the effect of art.

For one place where the poet has felt more strongly than the actor, there are a hundred where the actor feels more strongly than the poet.

* Le Kain, without any of the exterior advantages of Du Fresne, or rather with a countenance, a voice, with every thing against him, yet surpassed his predecessor in the character of Orasmin. Du Fresne was himself at the theatre on the night of Le Kain's first perfomance of it, and acknowledged that he had made him sensible of shadings and minutiæ in this character, which he had never before conceived. The truth I suspect is, that M. Diderot had never seen Le Kain perform, any more than Mademoiselle Clairon. The latter he certainly never saw after she had obtained her very great celebrity; he speaks of her only from public report, which he knew so well how to appreciate, that he almost always formed a right judgment from it. The case was directly the reverse with Du Fresne and Montmeni; when these actors were in their zenith, he frequented the theatre assiduously, but for twenty years he only went there occasionally, perhaps to see some new piece, as a courtesy to the author.—*Note by the Editor.*

Nothing can prove this more clearly than Voltaire's exclamation, when he was present at the performance of Mademoiselle Clairon, in one of his pieces: *Was that indeed written by me!*— Whence arose this? Was it that the actress understood the character better than the author?— Undoubtedly! Her ideal model in playing was far beyond that which the author had conceived to himself in writing; but this model was not herself. What did she do then?—She copied genius; she imitated the emotions, the actions, the gestures, the whole nature of a being very much above herself, she played and she played sublimely.

See Mademoiselle Clairon when she is herself, in the real transports of her anger; if then she preserved the state, the accents, the deportment of the theatre, you would laugh; yet upon the stage, you admire them. What does your laughter in this instance imply, but that real and feigned sensibility are very different things; that the real anger of the actress resembles acting too closely and that consequently there are two different sorts of anger, between which you know perfectly well how to discriminate. The images of the passions seen at the playhouse are not true images; they are exaggerated portraits, subject to certain conventional rules. I ask, therefore, who is the actor that will conform the most strictly to those rules? Who is he that will best catch the prescribed emphasis? Whether it be he in whom

his own character predominates, or he who throws it off entirely to assume one much more noble more elevated, more dignified. A man is by nature himself, he is another by imitation; the heart he is supposed to have is not that which really belongs to him. What then is the resource in such a case; it is to consider well the exterior signs which indicate a heart such as he is about to borrow; to address himself to the experience of those who are to see him, and deceive them by his excellent imitation of the symptoms he has studied. He who knows these symptoms best and exhibits them the most perfectly, is the greatest actor; he who leaves the least for the imagination of the great actor to fill up, is the greatest poet.

When, from having been for a long time in the habit of acting, the actor retains in society a theatrical emphasis and continues off the stage to be Brutus, Cinna, Burrhus, Mithridates, Cornelia, Merope, Pompey, what shall we say?—That to the exact measure of greatness or littleness of soul which nature has given him, he adds the exterior signs of a gigantic soul which does not belong to him, and thence creates ridicule.

But what a cruel satire have I just uttered, without thinking of it, against authors and actors. It is I believe permitted to every man to have a strong and elevated mind; it is I believe permitted to him to preserve the exterior deportment, the dignity, proper to such a soul, and I cannot think that the image of true grandeur can ever be

ridiculous. What follows? You will easily see. Certainly that true tragedy is a thing yet to be created, and that the ancients, notwithstanding all their defects, were nearer to it, than we are. The more the actions are sublime and the language simple, the more I admire the poet; but I am afraid that we have mistaken the heroism of Madrid for that of Rome. In fact what relation is there between the simplicity and force of the language used by Regulus, when he addresses the Roman Senate, dissuading them from ransoming the captives, and the declamatory and bombast language which would be given him by our tragic poets, "I have seen," said he, "your standards "suspended in the temples of Carthage; I have "seen the soldier deprived of arms which had "never been dyed with a drop of the enemy's "blood; I have seen liberty forgotten, and citi-"zens with their hands tied behind their backs; "I have seen the gates of the towns open, and "the harvest cover the fields, which we had ra-"vaged, and you can suppose, that ransomed "with gold, they will return more courageous. "You will add loss to ignominy: virtue when "once it has forsaken the soul that degrades it-"self, never returns. Expect nothing from "those who might have died, but who suffered "themselves shamefully to be manacled. O Car-"thage! how proud art thou in our shame!"

Such was his address—his conduct was responsive to it. Refusing the embraces of his wife

and children, he declared himself, as a vile slave, unworthy of them. He kept his haughty eyes fixed upon the earth, and disdained the tears of his friends till he had brought the Senate to consent to the counsels which he alone was capable of giving, and he was permitted to return into his exile. This was the moment in which the true hero shone forth. He was not ignorant of the torments that a barbarous enemy prepared for him, yet he resumed his serenity; he disengaged himself from those around him, who sought to protract his departure, with the same composure that he had formerly displayed when disengaging himself from his numerous followers, he went to relax from the fatigues of business in the fields of Venafre or at his country house at Tarentum.

Now place your hand on your heart and tell me in conscience, whether in any of our tragedies one word is to be found written in a spirit, conformable with virtue, so elevated, yet so easy, and what kind of air the greater part of our *fanfaronades* would have in such a mouth. If ever a man of genius should dare to give his personages the simple language of ancient heroism, the difficulties of an actor would be of a very different nature. For the rest, when I pronounce that sensibility is the character of goodness of the heart, with mediocrity of talent, I make an effort of which few men are capable, for if ever nature created a heart of sensibility, you know well that it is mine.

I ought to stop here, but I would rather produce

a proof out of its proper place than omit one; it is a circumstance which you yourself may, perhaps, sometimes have experienced. Invited by an actor or actress to see them in private and judge of their talents, you have found in them soul and sensibility, and have been lavish in your commendations, quitting them with the conviction of their success being brilliant. The next day, upon the stage, you have been surprised to find the same person hissed, and have been obliged to acknowledge in spite of yourself, that the hissers were in the right. Whence comes that? Is it that the talent of the performer was lost between one day and another? Not at all; but at a *tête-à-tête* you were yourself on a perfect level with him, you saw and heard him abstracted from all the conventional rules to be observed and were satisfied with his voice, his action, his demeanour; all was then in proportion to the little audience who witnessed the performance; exaggeration was not required. Upon the stage the case was wholly altered, there some other model was necessary; since every thing around was changed. On a little private theatre or in a room, you the spectator, being on a level with the actor, the true dramatic model would have appeared *outré*, and you would have imparted your apprehensions in confidence to your friend, but the morrow, on the public stage you would have been astonished at the success of the actor.

These last reflections are meagre and cold, but they are true. I will only ask you, and then

conclude, whether an actor ever says or does any thing in common life in the same manner as upon the stage.

But no, I will not conclude; I must relate a fact which I consider as decisive. There is at Naples a dramatic poet, whose name I once knew; when he has written a piece he seeks all over the town for those whose countenances, whose voices, whose whole characters are best suited to the performance of his several personages, and as it is to amuse the sovereign, nobody refuses to undertake a part. The company being thus formed, the poet exercises his actors sometimes separately, sometimes together, for six months. And when do you suppose they begin to understand the author, to play well, to advance towards the perfections which he requires? When they are exhausted with endless rehearsals, when they are absolutely what we call worn out: from this moment the effect is astonishing. It is after this painful exercise that the representations take place, and all who have been present at them concur in saying that those who have not seen these performances do not know what acting is. The representations continue for six successive months, during which the court experience the highest degree of pleasure that can be received from theatrical illusion. Can this pleasure which according to your opinion is as great, and even more perfect, the last time than the first, be the effect of sensibility.

To conclude; the question which we have now been discussing was some time ago touched upon by a very moderate writer, Remond de Sainte Albine, and a great actor, Riccoboni. The writer was on the side of sensibility, the actor was against it; this is a circumstance of which I was ignorant, and which I have only just learnt; you may compare their ideas with mine. For the present I will release you and myself also.

Such are the observations of M. Diderot upon this pamphlet. Whether Riccoboni was as great an actor, as his adversary Rémond de Sainte Albine was a moderate writer, I will not pretend to determine; but this I know, that both have written very common-place things upon the subject. As to our philosopher, he would not have been able to release himself and his reader so soon if he had known the fact I am about to relate. It is, that Mademoiselle Arnoud, that Sophy so affecting upon the stage, so full of mirth in company, so formidable behind the scenes for her *bon-mots*, commonly employs the most pathetic moments of her performance when she is making a whole audience weep, or tremble, to say something quaint or ridiculous to those with whom she is acting. For example, when she falls sighing, fainting, into the arms of her despairing lover and the whole house is in an extasy, she will say, to the grasping hero who holds her, *Ah ny dear Pillot how ugly you are.* What a prize to our philosopher would this anecdote have been. It might be here remarked further,

that the actors in the Italian Opera are very much in the habit of saying sportive things to each other during their by-play, but, perhaps, it would be answered that there is so little truth or vivacity in their manner of playing that they may very well addict themselves to such kind of sportiveness. This however, cannot be said of the sallies of Melpomene Arnoud; her acting, not only does not suffer from them, but it is impossible for a spectator, who sees her in these moments, to suppose that she is so little affected as to be able to talk nonsense. For the rest, these ideas deserve to be investigated more deeply; they are connected with a theory of the arts of imitation, as yet, far from being clearly understood.

These arts are always founded upon a hypothesis; it is not the truth which charms us in them, it is the falsehood approaching as nearly as possible to the truth; but falsehood always overdoes—the phantom of the imagination is always greater than the image of nature. What is it then that forms the essence of the great actor, of the player of genius? It is not sensibility,—in this respect I agree perfectly with M. Diderot; but neither is it the contrary quality. I have known men with hearts of flint yet having a great acuteness of mind, who could not perform a scene in a play even moderately. The great actor is he who is born with peculiar talents for imitation, which he has, by study, brought to perfection. I know well that this definition teaches nothing, but that is the

case with all exact definitions, and people must be content with it, for if they pretend to generalize they will have nothing but vague words,—and minds little accustomed to judge accurately will think they have been learning important truths when they have been attending only to idle babble. The integrals which combine to make a great actor, a great poet, or a great artist, have nothing to do with general qualities, but consist of modifications so minute that we have scarcely eyes penetrating enough to discern them, much less terms by which they can be explained; a line more or less suffices to destroy the talent or to carry it to its utmost height. Sensibility is then a quality neuter, and foreign to the talents of a great actor; it either may or may not exist in the subject who possesses this eminent talent, it neither increases or diminishes it. The moral character, and genius or talent are two things composed of qualities very independent the one of the other, so that genius may exist indiscriminately either with the greatest sensibility or insensibility. One finds people of all descriptions in the world, and the variety of combinations is inexhaustible.

November, 1770.

It is very true that M. Sedaine has written a tragedy in prose, that it has been accepted at the French Theatre, and that it will perhaps be played before Easter. M. de Voltaire is extremely indignant, afraid lest, if this new species of drama should succeed, it will do great injury to the tragedies in verse. As to ourselves, if the production be good we shall readily adopt it, without prejudice to any other equally so. It has been remarked, that, for some time, the patriarch has talked with a little severity of his age; he is in the wrong, and I adhere to one of our old sayings that the present age is quite as good as any other.

It is not right to indulge in spleen, and 'tis less excusable in the patriarch than in any other being whatever. To confound him I would have him read the following letter, and he will be forced to confess that there is no period in which history makes mention of a crowned head writing in such a taste and style. Although the letters they are pleased to write to individuals are not to be considered as gazettes, and ought to be, at least, as sacred as those of any other person, yet that with which the King of Prussia has just honoured me, appears a monument not less glorious to literature than one written by him some time ago to M. d'Alembert. In consequence, I cannot help permitting myself to insert it in these humble records, as the other has been consigned to

immortality in the registers of the French Academy. Alexander, perhaps, read the Iliad with as much pleasure as Frederic the Henriade, but we have no proof that the Macedonian Monarch possessed the art of writing, and still less that of singing like the Prussian.

LETTER *of the King of Prussia.*

Potsdam, September, 1770.

" It must be allowed that we citizens of the " North of Germany are not much blesssed with " Imagination;—this is asserted by Father Bon- " hours, and we must believe it upon his asser- " tion. As to you, more clear-sighted Parisians, " your imaginations make you find relations " where we should not have supposed the least " connection. In truth, the prophet, whoever " he may be, who does me the honour of amusing " himself at my expence, treats me with great " distinction. It is not for every body that per- " sons of this description experience their inspi- " rations: I shall begin to believe myself a man " of consequence, and nothing more will be " requisite but that some comet or eclipse should " honour me with its attention, to turn my head " completely.

" But all this was not necessary to do jus- " tice to Voltaire, a soul sensible to the obliga- " tion, and a grateful heart, were sufficient; it is " perfectly just that the public should pay for

" the pleasure it has received. No author ever " had a taste so near to perfection as this great " man; heathen Greece would have made a God " of him and erected a temple to his honour. " We only erect a statue, a feeble atonement for " all the persecutions which envy has found means " to excite against him, but a recompence ca- " pable of inspiring our youth and animating " them to endeavour at following so great a ge- " nius in the career he has run; a career where " many other persons of genius may still find " much to glean. From my infancy I have loved " letters and the arts and sciences, and when I " can contribute to the promotion of them, I " embrace the opportunity with all the ardour of " which I am capable, convinced that, in this " world, there is no true happiness without them. " You who are at Paris, in the vestibule of their " temple, you who administer at their altars, may " truly enjoy this inexpressible happiness, provided " you can hinder envy and cabal from approaching " them.

" I thank you for the interest you take in " the child that is born to us. I wish he may " have the qualities which he ought to possess, " and that, far from being the scourge of human " nature, he may prove its benefactor. I pray God " to keep and preserve you."

(Signed) " FREDERIC."

Upon the answer of M. d'Alembert to the King of Prussia, *A crown Sire, and your name,* his Majesty has been pleased to send two hundred German crowns for his subscription. The King of the Cimbric Zone (vulgarly called the King of Denmark) has since sent two hundred louis towards the statue of the great patriarch; thus this undertaking becomes at once royal and literary. His Danish Majesty has not attended to the latter description, else he would not have made his subscription so large by five sixths, since the question, above all things, was, by the moderation of the sum given, to descend as nearly as possible to the level of those with whom the monarchs deign to unite themselves in an undertaking already become so illustrious.

Francis Augustin Paradis di Moncrif, reader to the late Queen and to Madame the Dauphiness, a member of the French Academy, fell into his last long sleep on the 12th of November, at the age of eighty-three. We have many songs and ballads of his in the old simple and tender style, written with a taste so delicate, so exquisite, that they may be considered as chef-d'œuvres. There is no doubt, but that more genius is required to write an Iliad than to compose a good song, but perfection in any way, whatever it may be, is invaluable, and I am not more surprised to see the head of a man of taste turned with a couplet full of sentiment, delicacy and simplicity, than to

see him in a fit of enthusiasm at the prayer of Priam to Achilles. If Moncrif had never written any thing but his songs and ballads, he would have been the first writer, in his way, and that is always something. But he wrote various other works, which have diminished his reputation. We have, from his pen, several acts of French Operas, written in that vapid style of gallantry which is not less insipid and heavy than psalmodizing music mixed with little lively airs. He wrote an *Essay upon the means of Pleasing*, which is a poor performance, and of which the wits said—that it had not *the means*. In his youth, he composed a *History of the Cats*, which I never saw; a work, which pretended to be very facetious, but was very insipid, and which drew upon him many sarcasms and epigrams. Roi, the poet, having made a very severe one, Moncrif laid in wait for him as he came out of the Palais-Royal, and caned him heartily; but Roi, who was accustomed to such things, being not less supple than malignant, turned his head to Moncrif, and holding out his back to the stick, said quietly, *Play gently, pussy, play gently.**

Moncrif excepting his talent for writing tender and gallant songs, was a man of a very ordinary cast, but supple and courtier-like, so that he obtained himself a sort of reputation at court, or

Patte de velours, Minon, patte de velours, a mode of expression, in common use, to cats in France, when people are playing with them and would exhort them to play gently.—*Translator.*

rather in the late Queen's parties. He there played the man of great devotion, but at Paris he was a man of pleasure, and retained his passion for good eating and for the ladies to an extreme old age. Not long since, after the Opera, he presented himself among the Areopagus of the damsels belonging to it, saying, *If any one of these ladies be inclined to sup with a very brisk old man she will have eighty-five steps to ascend, a good supper to eat, and ten louis to carry away.* The apartment which he occupied at the Thuilleries, was indeed up at a great height; report says that he acquitted himself extremely well at these parties. He enjoyed a pretty ample fortune from the union of several places which the suppleness of his character had procured him, and it is said that he spent his money liberally. In his manners he was formal and precise, but extremely quick in his feelings as an author, and easily mortified. I remember that Marmontel, being very anxious for a place in the Academy, took it into his head in his *French Poésies* to compliment almost all the existing Academicians in hopes of conciliating them, and obtaining their votes at the first vacancy. Unfortunately however he drew upon himself almost as many rebuffs as he had made eulogiums; nobody found himself sufficiently praised, or praised according to his taste. He had quoted a couplet from a song of Moncrif's bestowing the warmest encomiums upon it, but Moncrif was angry and said that he ought either to have given the whole song

or not have meddled with it at all. I confess that I am not sorry when I see such violent expenditure of eulogiums, devoid of sincerity, and lavished for interested reasons alone, not only lost but producing even a contrary effect. One of this author's best pieces of poetry is the *unavailing renewal of youth or the History of Titan and Aurora*, but this was omitted in all the copies of his *Selection of Songs* circulated about the court. His advancing years was a subject of much mirth among his acquaintance. He was called much older than he really was, because M. de Maurepas, formerly Minister of State, was fond of endeavouring to make people believe that Moncrif was provost of the hall when his father learnt to fence; he must, according to that calculation have been more than a hundred years of age; but this was a mere joke.

His family had lived with much credit at Paris, and had some property. In his youth he had a great passion for fencing, and frequented the fencing schools, where it is not unusual to call the most adroit among the pupils provost of the hall, but he never performed, literally speaking, the functions of that office. He had been the friend and hanger-on of Count d'Argenson the Minister at War, and the King who rather loved to amuse himself with old people, said to him one day, that the world gave him more than fourscore years. *I will not accept them*, said Moncrif, and indeed he had no appearance of that age.

December, 1770.

In 1764, a book appeared, under the King's licence and approbation, entitled *Eristus, or the Charms of Goodness, by M. Seguier de Saint Brisson.* The censor, M. Rémond de Saint-Albine, says, in his *approbation,* that he considers this work as so much the more worthy to be printed since the author represents virtue under such colours as are the most proper to render it amiable. There is a passage in the work which it would be curious to introduce, between the title and the censor's approbation, where the charms and sweetness of virtue, are so highly recommended. In this passage the author says, that if he had a wife whom he permitted to run about to balls and other gaieties where she was exposed to all the charms of seduction, and she became unfaithful, he should not complain of it. But if, after having taken all the precautions proper to secure her against going astray, she should then offend against his honour and her own, he cannot say what he might not be tempted to do. Then, to shew the line of conduct he might possibly pursue, he proceeds to relate a story of an English woman, who, being on her death-bed, conjured her husband to forgive her for a fault of which she had been guilty, and confessed she had been unfaithful to him. The husband replied, that he forgave her, and added, that he, in his turn must implore forgiveness of her: *Having discovered,* he said, *what you have just confessed I have poisoned you and that is the cause of your*

death. Is it not curious to find such an illustration in a work, the professed object of which is to shew the *Charms of Goodness*, and which the censor particularly recommends as being calculated to *render virtue amiable.* It will, perhaps, hence be supposed that M. Seguier de Saint-Brisson is a very formidable man ;—not at all. The Countess d'Estrades, so well known in the anecdotes of the present times, as first, the friend and humble servant to Madame de Pompadour, as afterwards, mistress to the Count d'Argenson, and at length, as being banished the Court on account of a quarrel with the former, seems, at least, to be perfectly satisfied about the mildness of his disposition, for she has finished the series of her romantic adventures by marrying him. Thus has she exposed herself, with perfect lightness of heart, to the danger of being poisoned. It is true that this step has been taken at past fifty, so that she is, perhaps, hopeless of being ever tempted to be unfaithful to his bed.

Charles John Francis Henault, honorary president of the Parliament, intendant of the Household to Madame the Dauphiness, a member of the French Academy, and of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres died on the twenty-fourth of November, in the eighty-sixth year of his age. He had merely vegetated for some time ; his niece, the Countess de Jonsac, kept his house, presided at his suppers, and re-

ceived his company; the President himself, sat in his arm-chair sleeping, or talking in the true dotard stile.

All things considered, Henault may be cited as one as the most fortunate and happiest men of his age. His father an ancient farmer-general, if I am not mistaken, left him a large fortune. Born with some talents, but not sufficient to excite the envy and jealousy of any one, he enjoyed the privilege of persons in that middling station, that of being beloved by all who knew him, without having a single enemy. He was extremely frivolous, every thing about him was superficial but it was a superficialness that was always agreeable. He composed pretty little scraps of poetry for private circles, and gave excellent suppers; he had been much the fashion in his youth, and preserved the polish of the great world in his more advanced age. To satisfy his little ambition, for every thing about him was pretty and little, he early in life quitted the law and purchased the place of intendant of the household, to the late Queen. He afterwards wrote his *Chronological Abridgement of the History of France* which procured him a great literary reputation, and the title of double academician. It is a work certainly not destitute of merit, but, as I have said before, has obtained much more credit in the world, than it deserves. Nobody laboured more to give it celebrity than M. de Voltaire. The author soon rested his whole fame, nay, his very existence upon it; he thought of nothing but

polishing and refining it, and multiplying the editions; no sooner was one finished than he began another. Thus he contrived that it should always be talked of throughout the whole course of his life, and this contributed in no small degree to his happiness.

In his youth he was a great admirer of Madame du Deffand a woman celebrated for her wit and propensity to satire; she is at present more than seventy years old, and has been blind nearly twenty years; yet her mind retains its full vigour, and her satirical talents from being kept in constant exercise, have, it is said, acquired a great increase of readiness and strength. She piques herself on hating, mortally, every thing that bears the name of a philosopher; this has obtained her much credit among the people about the court and in the great world, in whose eyes the philosophers are the cause of every thing amiss which happens in France. Madame du Deffand, however, excepts from this general hatred, the Patriarch of Ferney, whose claws she has, doubtless, found too formidable. She was once the intimate friend of the Marchioness du Chatelet, and the day after this celebrated woman breathed her last, she put into circulation a most severe satire, under the title and form of her portrait. She retained her intimacy with the President Henault to the very last. For two or three days before his death, she was constantly in his chamber, with several of his friends. To rouse him from his lethargy, she

bawled in his ear, asking him, whether he remembered Madame de Castelmoron?—This name electrified the President, who answered, that he remembered her very well. She afterwards asked him, whether he had loved her better than Madame du Deffand? "*What a difference!*" replied the almost childish and dying man. Then he began a long panegyric of Madame de Castelmoron, always contrasting her amiable qualities with the unamiable ones of Madame du Deffand. This babble was continued for half an hour, in the presence of the whole assembled company, without its being possible for her who had given occasion to it, to stop either the panegyric or the satire, or to change the conversation. It was the dying song of the swan, and the President expired without ever having had the least idea to whom he had been addressing himself.

A Russian poet, by name Sumarokoff, the author of several tragedies, being at Moscow, had a violent quarrel with the first actress there; such accidents happen at Moscow as well as at Paris. One day, the governor of this capital, having commanded the performance of one of M. Sumarokoff's pieces, the poet opposed it, because this actress was to play the principal character. This reason not being sufficient to induce the Governor to change his order, the poet's head was turned to such a degree, that when the curtain drew up, he leaped upon the stage, and seizing the actress,

who had made her appearance, arrayed in all her tragic pomp, pushed her behind the scenes. But it was not sufficient thus to have disturbed the public tranquillity, in his poetic phrenzy, he wrote, with equal indiscretion and temerity, two letters, to the Empress herself, filled with complaints and invectives against the actress. I defy even a French poet to have done more.

And what, Mr. Tale-writer, Marmontel, do you suppose was the consequence of this frantic sally? That is very easy to guess; the poet's impertinent letters never reached the Empress; the minister charged with the poetic department read them, and issued his mandate to commit the poor poet to a dungeon, till further orders; most probably there he is still. Indeed, Mr. Tale-writer, you and your history are good for nothing; such *denouements* may do very well in a country celebrated for its mildness and polished manners, but the police is not yet carried to such perfection in Russia. Her Imperial Majesty received the poet's two letters, and after issuing out her orders relative to the Archipelago, to Moldavia, to Crimea, to Georgia, and to the borders of the Black sea, she had still time to write the following answer:

"I have been much surprised, M. Sumarokoff, at your letter of the twenty-eighth of "January, and still more at that of the first of "February. They both contain, as it appears to "me unfounded complaints against Belmontia;

" since she has done nothing but follow the " orders of Count Soltikoff. The field marshal " was desirous of seing your tragedy performed ; " that was to your honor. It was proper that you " should comply with the wishes of the first " person in Moscow ; and if he ordered the repre- " sentation of this piece, his will was to be per- " formed without any dispute. I think nobody " can be more sensible than yourself, of the " respect due to men who have served with glory, " and whose heads are white with age. I there- " fore counsel you to avoid similar disputes in " future ; by this means you will preserve the tran- " quillity of mind necessary for pursuing your occu- " pations; and it will always be more pleasing to " me to see the passions represented in your dramas, " than to read them in your letters.

" For the rest, I am your affectionate,

(Signed) " CATHERINE."

I, on my part, counsel every minister charged with the department of *lettres de cachet* to register this formulary in his books of office, and never to deliver any other, to poets and those who have a right to be of the irritable class, that is to say, who are by their situation, children and madmen. After this letter, which, perhaps, deserves immortality no less than the numerous other monuments of wisdom and glory, of the present reign, in Russia, I die with apprehension lest I should be confirmed in the heretical opinion, that good sense

does no harm to any body, even if found upon the throne.

Paris, January 1, 1771.

The most keen and fatal blow among the number given to the Encyclopedia, has rested, hitherto, absolutely unknown to the public, and it is an anecdote sufficiently curious and interesting, to be inserted in records, not destined for the profane. I doubt whether the whole history of literature can furnish a trait in any way to be compared with it, for united folly and impudence.

M. Le Breton, first printer in ordinary to the King, had engaged for half the property of the Encyclopedia, and was employed to print the whole of that work. The other half of the property was divided between three booksellers, two of whom are dead, and their shares having been taken by Le Breton and Briasson, they have remained sole proprietors of this great undertaking. As it has been their invariable maxim all their lives, that men of letters work only to require renown, and merchants to acquire wealth, they have consequently divided the proceeds from the Encyclopedia, into two parts, leaving M. Diderot all the glory, all the dangers, all the persecutions attached to it, and reserving to themselves the money arising from four thousand three hundred subscribers. M. Diderot's pecuniary recompense for the enormous labours which have consumed the greater part of his life, was fixed at two thousand.

five-hundred livres for each of the seventeen folio volumes, and a bonus of twenty thousand livres paid at setting out.

Le Breton, charged with printing the ten volumes which were to complete the work, and which in order to prevent new persecutions it was agreed were to be published all together, procured, in the first place, the regulations relative to the publication of works, that he might make himself thoroughly acquainted with the seizures which the police was authorized to make, and by that means prevent any new obstacles otherwise likely to be raised against the prosecution of the undertaking Tranquil, by these precautions, as to the work while it was going through the press, Le Breton was farther anxious to prevent the storms with which he thought he might be assailed at the moment of publication. In consequence he and a myrmidon erected themselves, without the knowledge of any one, into the sovereign arbiters and censors of every article inserted. They were printed as they came from the hands of the authors, but when M. Diderot had overlooked the last proof of every sheet, and put at the bottom the order to strike it off, Le Breton and his myrmidon laid their hands upon it, cutting out, mangling, suppressing any thing that appeared to them bold or liable to raise the clamour of the devout and make enemies to the work. Thus, on their own heads, and by their own authority, by far the greater number of the best articles appeared as

fragments, mutilated and deprived of whatever was most precious in them; nor did they concern themselves about the different parts of these mutilated skeletons being properly put together, they left them either wholly unconnected, or united by morsels of the most absurd and impertinent texture. The whole extent of the injury done by so unexampled and murderous a depredation will never be known, since the perpetrators of the crime burnt the manuscript as soon as the sheet was printed off, and left the evil without remedy. What may be advanced as very certain is, that Le Breton, clear sighted as he may appear in matters of interest, in every other respect, is one of the greatest blockheads in all France. It is not very certain that he understands the *Almanach Royal*, though it brings him in about thirty thousand livres a year. He never had any idea whatever of literature, and still less, if that could be possible, of philosophy: added to which he is as great a coward and poltroon as he is a blockhead. Thus qualified for the task he undertook, judge of the mischief which must have been done. This is the true key, though unknown to the world, of all the impertinences and contradictions that are to be found in the last ten volumes of the Encyclopedia.

The work was nearly printed, when M. Diderot having occasion to consult one of the great philosophical articles in the letter S, was not a little astonished to find it entirely mutilated. He

remained like one thunderstruck ; the whole atrocity of the printer burst upon him in a moment. He immediately examined several other articles, as well those of his own writing as from the hands of his ablest assistants, and found almost everywhere the same confusion and disorder, the same vestiges of the barbarous hands by which the crime had been committed. This discovery threw him into a state of frenzy and despair which I shall never forget,

I was in the country; he sent an express for me, desiring my return to Paris, and when I arrived he confided to me this incredible atrocity, consulting me what was to be done in the business. The booksellers who were associated in the undertaking, to whom the impudence and folly of their colleague was imparted, conjured the philosopher not to make them partakers in the vengeance he had a just right to inflict upon the wretch by whom he had been so infamously treated; they felt that a single word relative to this treachery, inserted by M. Diderot in the papers, would be their utter ruin, as no subscriber, if such a thing were known would take the ten volumes they were about to publish. They urged that the evil was entirely without a remedy as the manuscripts were destroyed, and that the last volume was absolutely in the press. I must confess that I was very little moved with their eloquence; it was to Le Breton they were to look for indemnification in an injury of which he alone was the author, and which he

had been carrying on constantly for a year and a half or two years without any compunctious visitations whatever. But a more powerful consideration made me recommend silence, and that was the safety of my friend. M. Diderot could not advertise the public of the imposition practised, without putting into the hands of his enemies a juridical proof of the manner in which he was continuing the Encyclopedia, notwithstanding the proceedings against it. To publish such a confession, was to pronounce his own sentence of banishment from France. I was besides persuaded that the public would be soon informed of the matter by the outcries excited from the other authors, when at the publication of the ten volumes they should see their works mutilated by the hands of a stupid printer.

It is very extraordinary that I never heard a complaint from a single author upon the subject. The length of time that elapsed between the writing and the printing of the articles had, no doubt, obliterated very much from their memories what they had written, and so many obstacles had been raised to the publication of the ten volumes, that the edition was sold to the subscribers in the provinces and in foreign countries, before the authors were able to read a line. Thus the greatest literary undertaking that had been published, since the invention of printing, was consigned by the hand of persecution to the mercy of a stupid and timid wretch, who erected himself into the arbiter

of its contents with an impudence perfectly unexampled.

This fact has hitherto been only known to about five or six persons, but it affords a fruitful subject for moral reflections that an ignorant and pusillanimous printer should, with impunity, have constituted himself the arbiter of so many persons illustrious for their talents; of men to whom the Empress of Russia, at her accession to the Throne, had offered the most unlimited protection, with every assistance worthy the generosity of a great princess and the vast importance of the undertaking.

Father Griffet, a French Jesuit, who has retired to Brussels or Liege, published, about a year ago, a *Treatise upon the different sorts of proofs which tend to establish the truth of history*, 1 *vol.* 12 *mo. four hundred and fifty pages.* This is a work of much solidity; many parts of which may be read with pleasure, though the author is in general too diffuse, and the critic will, from time to time, be tempted to throw it aside. He has given M. de Voltaire a complete drubbing upon his denying so pertinaciously the authenticity of *Cardinal Richelieu's political Testament*; this part is written with much force. M. de Voltaire endeavours to refute him in his *Questions upon the Encyclopedia*, but does not succeed; every reader of judgment will find the observations of Father Griffet unanswerable. The jesuit analyzes, also, the patriarch's Strictures upon the *Man with the Iron Mask*, and

M. de Voltaire recurs to this likewise in his *Questions.* Here he has a most decided advantage, not only over the jesuit, but over all the other babblers who have ventured to put forth their opinions upon the subject. The manner in which M. de Voltaire has treated this very extraordinary circumstance is a model of discretion, of penetration, of forbearance, and sound criticism. He gives hints that he knows perhaps more of the matter than he has ventured to tell, and he has for a long time kept those who have any nose, upon the scent, to detect his secret.

M. Saurin, has just given a new edition, revised and corrected, of his *English Gamester,* under the title of *Beverley, a tragedy of private life.* This piece is among those which is played but seldom, yet which always attracts company, from its total dissimilitude to the pieces commonly played, and as commonly abused when the performance is over. Since, however, many of our ladies with delicate nerves are shocked at the catastrophe and find the poisoning too horrible, M. Saurin in this new edition has given two fifth acts, one of which ends dolefully, as the piece has hitherto been played; the other more cheeringly. When Beverley is about to poison himself, his wife, his friend, and the old servant arrive in time to prevent the mischief, and to revive him with the assurance that his fortune is changed, that notwithstanding all the follies of which he has been guilty, all the pains

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he has taken to reduce himself and all belonging to him, he is not reduced to beggary. Judge of the excellence of a plot, the end of which may be changed from black to white, or from white to black without any injury. I must however think that this is not the case, that the plot is exceedingly injured, and that there is not the least atom of common sense in the change. Our Academicians and *beaux-esprits* allow a wider scope to genius than Sophocles and Euripides; they never would have taken it into their heads that the same subject could be wound up *ad libitum* happily or unhappily.

M. Saurin, with his double-faced denouement, reminds me of the Vicar of Montchauvet, in Lower Normandy, who came to Paris eighteen years ago, bringing with him a printed tragedy of David and Bathsheba, a choice morsel for those who were fond of amusing themselves with the follies of their fellow-creatures. He expressed himself as much astonished whenever he heard our poets harangue about the difficulty of forming a plan for a tragedy; for his part he had a secret for it, which he always found infallible. The knot, he said, must be at the conclusion, and he had formed a plan for a tragedy on the story of Belshazzar in which every thing would turn upon whether the monarch should sup or not in the fifth act; for if he should not sup, the hand could not write upon the wall, and adieu to the piece. Well then, he added since I intend that he shall sup, I say that he will in the first act; in

the second I say that he will not; in the third that he will; in the fourth that he will not; then the turn comes again in the fifth that he is to sup, and so the matter is settled. If I had not intended him to sup, I should have begun by saying that he would not, and so the turn for the negative would have come round at the conclusion. In truth, the Vicar of Montchauvet was a man of penetration, he knew the secret of some of our greatest artists. Of this curious piece, which was actually published some months after, an account has already been given.

I will not be entirely responsible for the efficacy of the remedy mentioned in the following recital; but, since a literary pharmacopolist, or, if I am required to speak more plainly, a druggist, like myself, must have somewhat of every thing in his shop; and since my sovereign remedy for diseases of the lungs, if it does not perform a cure, can at least do the patient no harm, I will beg you to read and have recourse to it, if you have occasion, provided you have faith and bottles to seal.

An officer in garrison at Rochefort, wearied with having pursued for a long time, without effect, the usual remedies for an obstinate cold, abandoned them at last, and resumed his ordinary course of life. He soon began to spit blood, and his lungs appeared seriously affected; still he persisted in abstaining from his remedies. One day having bot-

tled off a cask of wine in his cellar, he had half a pound of rosin and half a pound of yellow wax brought into his room, which he set about heating over a brazier, to seal down the corks of the bottles. This operation having lasted an hour and a half, he thought that he spit more freely, and that his cough was less dry than frequent. It then occurred to him that this might be the effect of the fumigation he had undergone, and he determined to renew the experiment; he accordingly walked about his room keeping the doors and windows close shut, in a perfect cloud formed by the smoke, and in four or five days he found himself perfectly cured. He imparted the discovery to the surgeon of his regiment, who, without having any great faith in its efficacy, thought there would be no harm in trying the experiment upon a soldier in the hospital, who was dying of a pulmonary complaint. He had him brought to his house, and made him, at intervals of four hours, undergo a fumigation proportioned to his strength; for being in a very weak state, he might have been suffocated by too strong a smoke. From the second day the patient's cough began to abate, and in six weeks his health was perfectly re-established.

The following singular adventure was related some years ago in an English Newspaper. Two men, tired of life, took the resolution of drowning themselves. Chance led them, without being known to each other, to fix on the same spot for

the execution of their purpose; and they met on Westminster-bridge, whence they purposed to throw themselves into the Thames. Very different motives had led to this result. One, born to a large fortune, was satiated with pleasure, and having no resources within himself, resolved to get rid of a life which he found painful and burthensome; the other having applied himself to commerce, which he had pursued for many years with indefatigable industry, was now, by a series of losses and disasters, irretrievably ruined. Despair brought one thither, disgust and satiety the other. Both being young, were struck with having come to the same spot for the same purpose by different routes. The disgusted man having heard the other's story, said to him, "There is no remedy for my unhappiness: there is for your's: I am rich, and can heal your sorrows, by giving you a part of my property: I shall at least have performed one good action before I destroy myself, and your motive for getting rid of life will be removed." The despairing man was delighted with the project of the disgusted one; but the latter, after saving the life of the other, had no longer any wish to make an end of his own; the good action he had done reconciled him to existence. A strong friendship ensued between the two men in consequence of this meeting: one gave the other his daughter in marriage, and both are now as much attached to life, as they were for a moment disgusted with it.

When this story was inserted in the paper, great

pains were taken to dress it up as much as possible; but it is only interesting as being a fact, and as one cannot but rejoice to find a madman saving the life of a sufferer, and learning of him the secret to endure life. But there would be no merit in fabricating such adventures; they cease to interest, the moment we doubt of their reality.

John James d'Oitons de Mairan, a gentleman of Beziers, in Languedoc, a member of the French Academy, formerly perpetual secretary to the Royal Academy of Sciences, and a member of all the most distinguished literary societies in Europe, a physician of eminence, a man of great merit, of thorough integrity, and of considerable talents, died on the 20th of February, in his apartments at the Louvre, aged ninety-three. He had arrived at this great age without any infirmity, and preserved his good looks, his activity, as well as the entire use of his faculties, to the last moment of his life. He might, according to all appearance, have continued his mortal career still farther, had he not, in the severe cold of the month of January, caught an inflammation on the lungs in going to dine with the Prince de Conti; this was succeeded by an erysipelas in the thigh, which turned to a mortification, and carried him off. He was not to be reproached in general for neglecting to guard himself sufficiently against the cold; his old valet-de-chambre, Rendu, had established a sort of concordance between the state of the thermometer and his mas-

ter's dress; and when M. de Mairan asked him in the morning, *how is the thermometer?* he answered, *at ratteen*, or *at velvet*, or *at fur*, according to the degree of cold: but on the fatal day when he was to dine with the Prince de Conti, out of compassion to his chairmen, he would not take them in such severe weather so great a distance as from the Louvre to the Temple, and took a hackney coach. As this could only set him down at the gate, he was obliged to cross the court on foot, by which he caught a cold, and returned home in the evening, never to quit his room any more.

Till this time he scarcely missed going out a single day of his life, and constantly mounted the ninety-six or hundred steps of the great staircase at the Louvre, to return to his apartments. He lived in the best societies at Paris, universally respected and esteemed; he dined out almost every day, passed the afternoon in making visits, and in the evening returned to his literary asylum. He was exactly the kind of person to live to a great age: his head was well-formed, he had great equanimity of temper, great moderation in his passions, or rather he was destitute of passions; he had sensibility enough to engage the regards of those with whom he associated, and to contract those ties of intimacy which were sufficient for him, which have not indeed the charms of friendship, but which *do* not draw after them the same obligations. He had not warmth of heart enough to feel the necessity of an attachment which rules despotically; of a friend

who disposes of us at pleasure, who forms the happiness or the misery of our lives: he had much prudence and foresight, paid great attention to himself, and was very methodical in whatever he did. Such were the elements that composed the character of M. de Mairan.

His methodical ways created in him a sort of pedantry, which, however, was not offensive, and a sort of egotism which did not shock, because it was veiled by great polish of manners, and great respect for the established customs of society. Although, since the beginning of this century, he had never stirred from Paris, he always retained his Gascon accent, as if he had but just alighted from the Beziers' stage; but this accent did not derogate in any way from the grace with which he spoke. The Academy of Sciences has lost in him the last adherent of Descartes, whose chimerical systems have been entirely destroyed by the more luminous ones of Sir Isaac Newton. The Cartesian party in the Academy was become so weak, that M. de Mairan was too wise to defend that philosopher's visions on the subject of physics; he restrained himself to maintaining that Descartes had one of the most powerful minds which his age could boast; and on this point no one was disposed to contradict him. It is now thirty years since Maupertuis, supported by the whole cohort of young academicians of the time, established the Newtonian Philosophy in the Academy of Sciences, and overthrew that of Descartes, which till then

had been triumphant. M. de Voltaire contributed not a little to this revolution by his *Letters on the English Nation*, and by his *Principles of the Newtonian Philosophy*. M. de Mairan was at that time engaged in a philosophical discussion with Madame du Chatelet upon the powers of animate and inanimate objects, and the prudent academician had nearly suffered himself to be drawn into a regular combat, when Madame Geoffrin said to him, "*Do you not see that every body will laugh, if you draw your sword against a fan!*" This observation silenced the knight of Beziers, and the dispute changed into a reciprocity of gallantries and compliments.

M. de Mairan died as he had lived, with wisdom and composure. Madame Geoffrin, at his entreaty, assisted at his last moments, and was with him when he received the sacraments. When the priests were gone, he thanked her very much for having made him perform these duties, as he thought that decency required of every one to go through them, though he confessed that if he had been left to himself they might possibly have been omitted, since he never in his life piqued himself upon attending the communion, or going to confession. He has left Madame Geoffrin his sole legatee. When he quitted Languedoc, at the beginning of the century, he gave up his property to his family, with the reserve only of a certain annuity, which was never paid him. He always, however, lived genteelly, and has, it is said, left fifty thou-

sand livres in ready money. The Regent Duke of Orleans loved M. de Mairan exceedingly, as indeed his grace loved all men of talents and learning.

The Marquis d'Argent, chamberlain to the King of Prussia, died the beginning of this year, in Provence, where he was born, and whither he had retired within the last two or three years. He was the author of several productions, literary and philosophical, not one of which is very likely to descend to posterity, but which at their publication found some readers, and were somewhat in vogue. His residence for so many years with a philosophic and war-like monarch, rendered him an able philologist; and his marriage with a dancer, if I am not mistaken, gave him a passion for Greek. I saw him at Paris about eighteen years ago, he was gay in society, but somewhat with the manners of a jolly fellow: he loved to tell stories, in which he was rather prolix, but they were notwithstanding told with spirit.

The poet, Bernard, who is indebted to M. de Voltaire for the surname of the *Gentle Bernard*, though still alive, may be erased from the tablets of the living. From having made extremely free with his constitution in various ways, both in the service of the ladies, and in the indulgences of the table, he fell, though robust by nature, into imbecility and decrepitude when little more than sixty years old; he always prided himself upon

being just the king's age. He expected to lead the same kind of life at sixty, that he had led at thirty; and this being out of the course of nature, he had an attack in the month of July last, which ended in a total loss of his faculties: his head is gone, he talks incoherently, but he is not ill; he sleeps, he eats, and as he is wholly insensible to his situation, he is not unhappy.

Bernard was formed for a man of *bonne fortune* and he did not resist his destiny. He was by nature frivolous, indifferent to every thing that did not administer to his pleasures but particularly discreet in his conduct, never making himself a public mark in any way. He was lively, gallant, full of attention to every body, but without attachment to any one; he united, in short, to a constitution indefatigable in pursuit of the fair sex, a sort of gracefulness and gentility of mind, if we may use these expressions, and what is very extraordinary in a Frenchman, a reserve with regard to his amours which nothing could subdue. If the chronicles of Paris are to be believed, this last quality procured him many favours. Our Lord says, *No man can serve two masters at the same time*; but the *Gentle Bernard* thought it very possible that a man might serve two or three mistresses; he consequently never quitted one till he received his dismission, and then he resigned himself quietly to his fate, never betraying the matter by uttering a word of complaint. Such reserve, accompanied with so many other engaging qualities, could not fail, particularly in France, to

recommend him very much among the ladies. His enjoyments were, however, by no means confined to affairs of gallantry, he was not an atom less devoted to the pleasures of the table. He dined and supped profusely every day, and was the only man I ever saw who could support such a mode of living at Paris, for any length of time without interruption. M. de Châtellux, since Bernard's attack, says, he has observed that all the men attribute it to his devotion to the fair sex; while the ladies lay the blame entirely upon his excesses at table. This is a remark not to be despised.

The *Gentle Bernard* was born at Grenoble: his father was, I think, a sculptor. In the war of 1733 he followed, I forget what general, into Italy, in quality of his secretary; it was some general who died there. The Marshal de Coigny, who knew Bernard, took him under his protection and made him secretary-general to the dragoons, a post which he always retained, and which brought him in an annual revenue of ten thousand livres. He remained at the Hotel de Coigny till the death of the Marshal, and contrived to be regarded with no less kindness and friendship by his grandsons, than by the Marshal himself, always avoiding the character of a humble hanger-on, and preserving his liberty and the power of pursuing his own pleasures, while shewing all the regard and attention due to his connection with the family of his protector.

He lived constantly in the best company, with-

out being therefore obliged to give up the bad, in which he delighted. He was acquainted with Madame de Pompadour before she came to court; he and the Abbé Bernis were the *beaux-esprits* of the society of Madame d'Etoiles, wife to a sub-farmer general, when she lived in obscurity, and she did not forget them when she had arrived at her better fortunes; the Abbé became a minister and a Cardinal, but Bernard was too wise to desire a more brilliant situation than that in which he had always lived, or to sacrifice his independence at the shrine of ambition. Madame de Pompadour, however, made him librarian to the King, at Choisy, a post which, without being fatiguing, procured him a very comfortable and pretty habitation in that royal house.

The same spirit of discretion, that governed him throughout, prevented his ever publishing any of his works; the opera of Castor and Pollux set to music by Rameau, is the only piece of his writing ever printed with his own consent, and that was done merely in compliance with the usual custom. It is on the whole a moderate production, but contains some very pretty madrigals; it was, however, found impossible to set it to music. Bernard wrote a great many little pieces of poetry which were circulated among the societies he frequented, but were never printed; they all breathe a spirit of gallantry, and have a sort of graceful frivolity. If you can be content with flowers only, such you will find them, but nothing farther must be expected; after flowers you will again have

more flowers. His poem, entitled the *Art of Love*, has enjoyed a high reputation for thirty years without ever having been given to the public. He used to read it in the societies he frequented, and it was always exceedingly admired; I never heard it but once, but I will venture to predict, that should it ever be printed it will experience a most capital downfall, and every body will be astonished at the reputation it has enjoyed. Another poem, which he calls *Paulina*, has, in like manner, often been read among his friends, but it appears to me still more meagre than the *Art of Love*. His best work is one which I do not know, entitled a *Collection of Oriental Poetry*; it is said to be far superior to any of the other productions, but not being acquainted with it I can pass no judgment upon it.

The *Gentle Bernard* was then the Anacreon of France; but an Anacreon frizzed, powdered, and gewgawed, whom Baudouin might have painted extended upon a sofa in a boudoir, in a silk night gown and pantaloons, with yellow morocco slippers, and not have been out of character. The same discretion which prevented his giving the public any of his productions, prevented his ever aspiring to any literary honors. Not above three months ago, when the French Academy threatened with a great dearth of academical subjects, had it hinted to him that he might obtain one of the vacant places, if he would become a candidate, he declined the distinction, saying that it was one to which he had no title. With this spirit of moderation he escaped censure and envy, and lived

happy; he might, indeed, have been chronicled as one of the happiest men of his time, if he had not outlived himself; if the stroke which sunk him into imbecility had, instead of that, deprived him of life. As his mind alone is affected, it is much to be apprehended that he may continue many years in the miserable state to which he is reduced.

Since the rage for acting proverbs has become so prevalent at Paris, a class of people have arisen who go from house to house, taking off, in one of these little dramas, any one who is well known and has any thing ridiculous about him, and then the spectators are set to guess the proverb. This manner of contributing to the amusement of a circle is not precisely the mode of acquiring distinction of the highest order, but it gives a sort of distinction and is the means of introducing people into good company, who, but for such a talent, would never have been admitted there. Among others who have shone awhile in this way, is a certain Mademoisselle Delon, of Geneva, who married a gentleman here, and now calls herself the Marchioness de Luchet. Another actor in this way, is a Count d'Albaret; another is a clerk in the foraging department, who imitates the English so admirably that he is commonly called *Lord Gower**. With

* Ambassador from England to the Court of France at this period.

this troop are sometimes mingled Previile and Bellecour, both of the French theatre and both excellent actors, and they also sometimes bring with them the advocate M. Coqueley de Chaussepierre, who is, they say, admirable. Lord Gower some little time since got into a scrape which has proved the ruin of Madame de Luchet. A woman of quality, who, to say the truth, has always had the character of being somewhat relaxed in her morals, being at the house of Madame de Luchet, Lord Gower imitated an English physician so well, that the lady was completely taken in, and being anxious to consult him, they retired together into a private room, where, it is said, the consultation was carried to very great lengths. This story made a great noise; Lord Gower and Madame de Luchet having been imprudent enough to put it into circulation. The Lady enraged at having been thus sported with, and at having become in consequence a subject of mirth to the Parisians, made a formal complaint against the proceeding, upon which the English physician was thrown into prison, and Madame de Luchet reprimanded at the police. Here then is an end of her, since a woman who has undergone such a reprimand cannot be received into any company whatever.

A young man who is studying painting has introduced another kind of amusement, which consists in imitating by himself alone a combination of many things. For instance, he executes a chorus with a full orchestra; I have known him place

himself behind a large folding-screen, and imitate a chorus in a convent of nuns so admirably, with such variety of voice and manner, that you would swear there were at least a dozen of the pious sisters; nay, you would even be able to tell their respective ages, and the physiognomy of each. It is a very singular, but a very general observation, that these gentlemen who imitate others so well, are not pleasant as themselves; when they cease to be the person they are taking off, and by which you have been so much entertained, they become flat and insipid, since they are no longer any thing but themselves.

It is not our purpose to relate here all those anecdotes of our princes when they were upon their travels, which were recorded so abundantly in the public papers; but we cannot refuse ourselves the pleasure of citing one of Monsieur, brother to the Dauphin*, which we do not remember ever to have met with. In his way through Avignon, having stopped at the hotel of the Duke de Crillon, the officers of the town presented themselves, to request the honour of guarding him: he thanked them very cordially, but added, *that a son of France had no occasion for any guard when lodged at the house of a Crillon.* This is a charming compliment, worthy to have come from the heart of Henry the Fourth.

* Now Louis the Eighteenth, King of France.

About two months ago, we lost M. Joliot de Crebillon, censor-royal, and formerly censor of the police, known himself by several pleasing works, but much more celebrated through the memory of a father, whose labours have obtained so high a reputation in his country. He died in the seventieth year of his age.

It is a singular circumstance, that the sons, both of Crebillon and Racine, have acquired some reputation in the republic of letters, though in a very different manner, and following a very different career from that of their respective fathers. One seems to have aimed at supplying the feebleness of his powers by the importance of the subjects on which he wrote, the other by their extreme frivolity; and if one looked for success to the religious zeal, and the other to the prevailing taste of his age, it must be confessed that the event justified both calculations.

As well as the greater part of our celebrated writers, M. de Crebillon, the son, has enjoyed his moment of popularity; but fashion in literature, as in all other things, is of no long duration, and that of the species in which this writer distinguished himself must be, from its nature, more transient than any other. For a long time, a very long time, he had the mortification of seeing himself survive his reputation. The *Letters of the Countess de* * * *, and the *Letters of Alcibiades*, which appeared eight or nine years ago, did not

obtain even a momentary popularity, and only served to make him feel more acutely how entirely his former reputation had passed away.

However light and frivolous may be the taste which reigns in all the writings of M. de Crebillon, he cannot be denied the credit of having invented a species of novel peculiar to himself. Granted that the manners and passions he has pourtrayed never existed but in particular societies, that his paintings are rather portraits of individuals, or creations of his fancy, than pictures copied after nature, it will not be the less true that there is in his manner of writing, particularly in his early works, infinite vivacity, infinite ingenuity. In the *Egaremens de l'Esprit et du Cœur*, there are details full of grace and delicacy, with a fair decorum of morals and a nice observance of the world, particularly of the characters of women. The *Sopha*, more freely, more unequally written, displays a great variety of character, and presents many excellent comic scenes. In *Tanzai and Néadarné* there is a great deal of nonsense, but also a great deal of imagination and originality. The tale of the *Chances by the Fire-side* is much more feeble and more negligently put together; it is the most determined, the most extravagant fatuity, yet which attains its end with all possible appearance of truth.

There is reason to believe that the manners which M. de Crebillon has permitted himself to paint are not, in general, as factitious, as ephemeral, as individual, as certain critics have endeavoured

to persuade us; since among these works are many which still maintain their ground, and which have not been less popular in Italy, Germany, and England, than in France. The authors of Tom Jones and of Tristram Shandy, and the celebrated Garrick, have done justice to the talents of Crebillon; and of all our fashions so brilliant and so fleeting, few have had a greater run in London than the tale of the *Sopha*. It is even well known that a young Englishwoman*, of good family, was so much fascinated with the work, and with the idea she formed from it of the author, that she took a journey to Paris expressly to see him, and after having assured herself that she could make him happy, married him privately, renouncing for his sake her name, her family, and her country. M. de Crebillon lived with her many years in a very private manner, but enjoying the utmost happiness: it was not till after her death that the circumstances of so romantic a marriage were made known. Thus it is that every thing in the world is *hit or miss*; the author of a libertine tale inspires a woman of distinction with so ardent a passion, that she crosses the seas in search of him, while the lover of the *New Heloïse*, of all lovers the most passionate, the most faithful, is reduced to marrying his maid-servant.

M. de Crebillon did not in any way resemble his writings. The *éclat* which attended them at

* Miss Strafford.

their first appearance, was the occasion of his company being much sought after; but this was soon over, and he afterwards mingled but little with the world. His conversation was far from being brilliant or fluent, it was sometimes even heavy; he affected long set speeches, even in the societies where he was most intimate. Collé and Monticourt, his oldest friends, often attacked him upon his reserve and formality, upon the great air of dignity which he always maintained, and which he could not throw off, even in their most frolicksome moments.

April, 1771.

Mademoiselle Biheron, now more than fifty years of age, poor, living upon a slender income of twelve or fifteen hundred livres a year, exceedingly devout, has all her life had a great passion for anatomy. After having for a long time attended the dissection of dead bodies at the different amphitheatres, she conceived the plan of making artificial anatomy; that is to say, of composing not only an entire artificial body, with all its parts, both external and internal, but of making also all the parts separately in their highest perfection. If you ask me of what they are made, that is more than I know; not of wax certainly, since they resist the action of fire. I can only say farther, that they have no smell whatever, that they are incorruptible, and executed with astonishing accuracy,

Examine the interior of the head, examine the lungs, the heart, or any other part, you will find them so perfectly imitated, that the most accurate observer would with difficulty distinguish them from nature. The celebrated Sir John Pringle, when he came to Paris some years ago, was extremely anxious to see these extraordinary specimens of industry and ingenuity, and was so astonished when he did see them, that he could not forbear exclaiming, in the true language of an amateur, "*Nothing is wanting, Madam; but that they should stink.*" I believe, indeed, that Mademoiselle Biheron's work is a thing *unique* in Europe, and I cannot but think that the government ought long ago to have purchased it for the cabinet of Natural History in the King's botanic garden: above all, it should recompense the artist liberally, since it is essential for a great nation to encourage any distinguished talent. Poor Mademoiselle Biheron, however, never having been handsome, not having had any patron, and not having been able to keep a good house, has remained neglected and almost unknown, living in an obscure house in the Estrapade, the same that was formerly inhabited by Denis Diderot, the philosopher. She has at least procured to those who are desirous of instructing themselves, the means of forming an idea of the structure and economy of the human body, and of acquiring some knowledge of anatomy, without the disgust, oftentimes not to be conquered, of attending the dissection of human bodies. This lady has

great precision in her ideas, and demonstrates with equal clearness and accuracy.

I have already had the honour of relating to you some of the feats and frolicks of Mr. Sumarokoff, the Russian poet; but I am not able to give any opinion of his tragedies, since I do not know them. The following letter will give you some idea of his taste with regard to French literature,

Answer of M. de Voltaire to a Letter from M. Sumarokoff, the Corneille of Russia.

"Castle of Ferney, Feb. 26, 1769.

"Your letter and your works, Sir, are a strong "proof that genius and taste are of all countries. "They who have said that poetry and music are "confined to temperate climates, are in a great "error. If the climate had so much power, Greece "would still produce Platos and Anacreons, as "she produces the same fruits and the same flow-"ers; while Italy would still be the seat of the "Horaces and the Virgils, the Ariostos and the "Tassos. Rome, however, now produces nothing "but processions, and Greece is the seat of the "Bastinado. It appears, then, that the arts can "only flourish under sovereigns who understand "and encourage them; they change the climate, "and make roses spring up in the midst of snow.

"This is what your incomparable sovereign "does. I could fancy that the letters with which

"she honours me come from Versailles, and that "yours is from one of my brethren of the French "Academy. Prince Koulouski, who remitted me "her letter and yours, has an equally happy mode "of expressing himself; and this is wha I particularly admire in all the great men from Russia, "who have come to visit me in my retreat. You "have a prodigious advantage over me; I do not "know a word of your language, while you are "perfect masters of mine. I am going to answer "all your questions, in which your sentiments are "very obvious, though veiled under the appearance of doubt."

"Yes, Sir, I regard Racine as beyond all dispute the best of our tragic poets; as he who has "spoken the most powerfully both to the heart "and the reason, who alone has been truly sublime, without being in the smallest degree inflated, and who has in his diction a charm "entirely peculiar to himself; he is moreover the "only one who has treated love tragically, for "before him Corneille had made this passion speak "well in the *Cid* alone, and this piece is not his: "love is ridiculous or insipid in almost all his "other pieces. I think entirely with you upon "Quinault, he is a great man in his line; he could "not have written the *Art of Poetry*, but Boileau "could not have written *Armida*. I subscribe "entirely to all that you say of Molière and of "sentimental comedy; the latter, to the reproach

" of our nation, has succeeded to the only true " comic style, which was carried to such perfection " by Molière.

" Since Regnard, who was born with a genius " truly comic, and who alone has come in any degree " near to Molière, we have had nothing but a sort " of monsters. Authors, who were incapable of " any thing like a good comic stroke, have taken " upon themselves to write comedies, merely with " a view to getting money. They had not strength " of mind enough to write tragedies, they had not " vivacity enough to write comedies, they knew " not even what kind of language to put into the " mouth of a valet; they have given tragic adven- " tures to persons in common life. People say " that there is a great deal of interest in these " pieces, and that, when well played, they act " powerfully upon the feelings. This may be; for " my part, I never could read them, but they say " that the acting favours the illusion. These bas- " tard pieces are neither tragedies nor comedies; " when a man has no horses, he is happy to be " drawn by mules.

" I have not been at Paris for twenty years. " I have been told that Molière's plays are no " longer performed there. The reason, in my " opinion, is, that every body knows them by " heart; almost all the good strokes in them are " become proverbs: besides, there are tedious parts " in them: the plots are sometimes weak, and the " *dénouement* rarely ingenious; he sought only to

" paint after nature, and undoubtedly he is one
" of the greatest painters from nature that ever
" existed.

" You have here, Sir, my profession of faith
" upon the subject on which you ask it. I am
" sorry that you resemble me in your bad health:
" happily you are younger, and will for a longer
" time do honour to your nation; for me, I am
" already dead to mine. I have the honor to be,
" with the infinite esteem I owe you, Sir," &c.

This profession of faith is somewhat shortened; but the secret end of decrying many dramatic works which have succeeded, is not the less obvious. These repeated declamations against sentimental comedy come with but a bad grace from the author of the *Prodigal Son* and *Nanine*, which are nothing else but sentimental comedies, and which do not shine from the comic parts the author has attempted to introduce. In general, a piece is not bad on account of its kind; it is bad only in proportion to the weakness and want of talent in the author, to the capacity or incapacity of him by whom it was created. The comedies of Molière are not excellent, because of their species; on the contrary, they are defective in this point of view, because the false delicacy of our manners has not permitted him to call things by their names, to paint characters with the precision and truth that they require: even in his satirical allusions there is an ambiguity which, instead of designating things, leaves them rather to be guessed. But his pieces

still rise superior to these little objections, because Molière was a man of very superior talents, and the *Philosopher without his Knowledge*, with some other pieces of this stamp, will please as long as there is any taste remaining in France.

M. Sumarokoff may procure letters to be written to him by the first man of his age, but he can never have one that will bear any comparison, in my mind, with that he was honoured with from his august sovereign. This letter shews so great a soul—a soul of such simplicity, and so superior to the highest rank this world has to bestow, that I shall preserve it carefully, as one of the finest monuments of the reign of Catherine the Second. It is the first time since sovereigns existed, that the supreme power has discovered white hairs, and services rendered to the state, to be more respectable in a subject than the representative character conferred on him by that power. It is the first time that the sovereign of the most extensive dominions in Europe has not thought it unworthy of herself to forgive, with true maternal goodness, a poet, who enjoys by his situation, the privilege of sinning at every moment against common sense; a privilege which everywhere else would have been contested, and superseded by a lettre-de-cachet, no matter whether under a good or bad form.

I mentioned to you, when I noticed the death of M. de Mairan, that he had made Madame

Geoffrin his sole legatee. The manner in which she has employed her inheritance, fully justifies the high esteem entertained for her by the deceased academician. After having shewn him the most kind attention during his illness, and paid the utmost respect to his memory after his death, she only took possession of the property bequeathed to her, to distribute it among the relations and friends of the testator. Thus the deceased academician's relations owe to Madame Geoffrin a property of about a hundred thousand livres to which they had no claim whatever, which they had never sought for or expected. The philosopher dying, said: *What I have always particularly admired in you, Madam, is your spirit of order and regularity; I look upon these qualities as the diamonds of the mind.* If it be to these qualities that the relations of M. de Mairan are indebted for the generosity they have just experienced, they ought to hold them in no less esteem than he did.

The life of Savage, an English poet, has just been translated into French, by M. Letourneur, the same who translated *Young's Night Thoughts*. This life is very interesting; it is the history of one who was, from his birth, most unfortunate, whose character was eccentric, whose genius was ardent; of a being sometimes benevolent, sometimes malignant,—sometimes proud, sometimes base,—sometimes true, sometimes false;—in all respects rather deserving pity than hatred, con-

tempt than eulogium; agreeable to hear, dangerous to associate with. The work is an excellent lesson upon the inconveniences attending on intercourse with poets, upon their frequent want of principle and of good morals; it would have been charming and worthy of being put into comparison with the Memoirs of the Count de Grammont, if the English author had intended to compose a satire upon his hero, but unfortunately he writes in perfect seriousness.

The account of this unfortunate man, the son of Anne, Countess of Macclesfield, who, in order to procure a divorce from her husband, with whom she lived upon very bad terms, confessed herself with child by Lord Rivers, is interspersed with extracts from his poetical works, which are all very fine. This Countess of Macclesfield was a strange woman, and persecuted her child with a rage for which no foundation whatever appears, which continued through a long series of years, and which nothing could extinguish. If such a character had been introduced in a play or a novel, it would have been condemned as wholly out of nature, yet we see it exist in nature. We then, sometimes condemn nature? and why not? —Does she not, sometimes, deserve to be condemned?

The life of Savage is followed by that of Thompson, the author of *the Seasons*, and of some tragedies. This life is the very reverse of the other, and is tedious and unamusing. For the

happiness of those who are connected with the man, such a character as Thompson's is to be desired, but for the interest and entertainment of the reader, he had better be like Savage. I have only one word to say of Thompson's Seasons, compared with the Georgics of Virgil; it is, that the muse of Thompson resembles our Lady of Loretto, while that of Virgil resembles Venus; the one is rich and covered with diamonds, the other is lovely, naked, adorned only with a simple zone. Virgil is a model of good taste, Thompson is exactly the writer to corrupt the taste of a young man.

A CONSULTATION *intended to re-establish the memory of a son accused of having murdered his mother, and to save the life of his wife, detained in prison as an accomplice of his crime, against a sentence of the tribunals of Saint-Omer and Arras.*

I know not who may be the author of this memorial, but he writes eloquently. Though the style be somewhat inflated, it is impossible not to shudder at the fate of this unfortunate son, and still more in thinking of what we may all be exposed to. It is now midnight; I write, I reflect, I meditate; I am occupied with endeavouring to make myself better, and to render the same service to my fellow creatures. In a few minutes, I shall lie down to seek repose, and who can say that a sudden death may not have carried off my wife or

daughter, and that, by a combination of circumstances, which seem to criminate me, I may not be seized and thrown into a dungeon, from whence I shall only be removed, to suffer a cruel and ignominious death. Whatever strength of mind I may have received from nature, I certainly never could assert my innocence with more constancy and resolution, than Montbailli, which was the name of the accused. If I were to declare, in the midst of torture, *that I did not commit the crime*, I should use the same words that he did. If I were to say, at the place of execution, *I ask forgiveness of my God and of my king, for any faults I may have committed towards them during my life, but I do not ask pardon for this fault, since I have not committed it*, I should speak like him.—If, urged by the ministers of religion, I should say to them, upon the scaffold,—*You press me to acknowledge myself guilty of parricide, but would you take upon you, to be answerable, before God, for the falsehood you have solicited?*—I should speak like him.—If, battered by the strokes of the executioner, I were to say, with a dying voice,—*I acknowledge that I have been guilty of faults; I die contentedly to expiate them; but the murder of which I am accused has never sullied my hands; the idea of it never entered my mind*;—I should speak like him.—If, from the midst of the flames into which my mangled limbs were cast, I were to declaim by my gestures against the sentence by which I had suffered, I should do just as he did. But what would all this avail me?

An ill-considered report of the physician or surgeon, a domestic quarrel, a real or pretended menace, the proximity of our apartments, some effects spotted with blood, my cloaths torn;—such presumptions as deprived Montbailli of his life, and of his honour, might equally deprive me of mine.

I tremble when I reflect upon the uncertainty of our fate, and am confounded at the vices of the criminal jurisprudence, among a people who call themselves polished, and pique themselves upon their humanity. It appears to me, that when it becomes a question to condemn a man to the last punishment, the law ought to refer it to the wisdom of the judges to examine the proofs and compare them with the nature of the crime.—The testimony of two men shall be sufficient!—Is it a thing so rare for two men to be deceived?—There are circumstances in which the testimony of one would be all-sufficient, nay, in which none may be required;—but are there not others in which that of twenty could hardly weigh against the improbability of the fact?—and is there any fact more improbable than parricide?—To believe that a like crime had been committed, Cicero thought that the culprit ought to be seized upon the body of his father, and dragged before the judges while his hands were yet dyed with the blood.

Here is an orator who annihilates, as the wind disperses the dust, the presumptions urged against the pretended culprit at Saint Omer; here are physicians and surgeons of the Capital, whose

decisions are in direct opposition to those referred to. I place myself among the number of the judges convicted of having condemned an innocent man to death,—I ask myself what would become of me under such circumstances, and it is impossible for me to answer the question. I am sure that the image of the sufferer would be eternally before my eyes for the rest of my life; and even if I were certain of never again striking any but the guilty with the sword of the law,—I envy no man this terrible prerogative. We have, however, seen five or six dreadful examples of these fatal errors in the administration of justice within no very long interval of time. If the lives of the citizens are thus lightly sported with, what can be expected with regard to their fortunes?

When the cries of indignation, which issued from the bottom of M. de Voltaire's retreat, roused us from the apathy in which we were sunk, and in which, but for them, we might still have remained, respecting the murder of a citizen massacred by the laws, and that the affair of the unfortunate Calas was transferred from the Parliament of Toulouse to the tribunals of Paris;—when the memory of the sufferer was cleared, and the ignominy, in which the family had been involved was removed,—some reclamation was expected on the part of the judicature at Toulouse, which, by this means, was placed under so dark a cloud, and its silence astonished every body. The reason of it has since been known;—the

Parliament of Toulouse procured a copy of the proceedings in the tribunals at Paris, and named commissioners to examine them; these commissioners were very numerous and their sittings lasted a long time. After the most rigorous examination, the report made by them was, that the sentence of the tribunals at Paris, which set aside theirs, was just; that there never was sufficient ground for the sentence they had pronounced, condemning the accused to capital punishment.—This fact I had from the son of one of the commissioners. Had I been of the number of these violent magistrates who, by a hasty sentence, shed innocent blood, and heard this report of my brethren, if I had the least spark of religion I could not hesitate a moment to turn Capucin, and, after having expiated my offence by all the ways in which I could possibly hope to disarm the divine vengeance, I must die in a trance.

Anecdote extracted from one of the hundred volumes of oriental manuscripts, preserved in the Royal Library at Berlin.

Chang-hi was the Marcus Aurelius of China for his wisdom, and its Louis the Fourteenth, in his taste for despotism and in the length of his reign. His family was very numerous; there were two thousand princes of his blood living, and an ancient law condemned to death any Chinese who, even in his own defence dared to raise his hand against a prince. A fatal event opened the eyes of the sovereign to so odious a privilege.

Sunni and Idamia came out of a temple consecrated to Tien. Idamia was the most beautiful woman in China, Sunni was the most revered descendant of Confucius. It was evening, and they had gone, according to their usual custom, to render thanks to the Supreme Being for the favours he had bestowed upon their children. On that day the youngest had obtained a prize for agriculture, and the eldest had celebrated in a poem, the victory of his brother. Sunni and Idamia were returning home, preceded by their two sons who held each other by the hand. They were stopped by a crowd of people who followed the car of Prince Yu. The eldest of the young Sunnis, being separated from his brother, was pushed under one of the wheels of the car and killed. His mother, Idamia, rushed forwards to the assistance of her son, but, falling, perished with him; the youngest darted forwards to the heads of the horses; the father, in the violence of his agitation, drew his poignard and cut them in the flanks; Prince Yu was thrown out from his car, and had nearly perished by the blows of Sunni. In a town where there was a less regular police than at Pekin what might have been the consequences of this tumult. The prince was at length rescued from the fury of Sunni, and Sunni himself was thrown into a dungeon, while the gates of the Imperial Palace were surrounded by a herd of cringing slaves, all crying aloud for vengeance on the audacious Sunni

Some days after this event, Sunni was brought before the Emperor and the Council of Colaos.

He was interrogated and defended himself with that honest pride which enlightens a sovereign without wounding him. He declared that if again he was called upon to revenge his wife and son, he should again forget the respect he owed to his masters and that due to the law. " I condemn myself to death." he added, " but acquitted towards my country, I " must speak with the freedom of a being who has " no longer any dependence but upon God, and " upon nature.—I have lived, he continued, " sixty years faithful to my native land; why has " my happiness passed away like a dream? Why " am I now to perish with ignominy? By what " fatality are my wife and son to be murdered " without my being permitted to avenge them? " —Who art thou, cruel man, that thou art to be " the arbiter of my fate? Couldst thou be flat- " tered with my coming to thy palace to kiss thy " feet and embrace the knees of thy sons?—Chance " made thee Sovereign,—chance ordained that " Prince Yu should be born of thy blood. For " me, I descend from Confuscius, and posterity " shall judge which was the most respectable, " whether the son of Cang-hi, who crushed men " under the feet of his horses, or the descendant of " Confucius who knew how to die for the laws of " his country, although they injured him. Cruel " Prince Yu, you accuse me of menacing you with " my poignard; be a father, be a husband, then if " you see your wife or your son expiring under " my ear, put yourself in my place and judge me " You appeal to the laws of our country, I appeal

" to those of nature. Woe to thee! if, at sight of " the blood of thy wife, or thy son, thou couldst " command thyself so far, as to recal to thy mind " a decree of the police, and distinguish one man " from another. It is said, that thou hast not the " barbarous and narrow mind of thy courtiers; it " is happy for thee. Thou mightest avert my " punishment, but I never can consent to regard " the muderer of Idamia as my benefactor; I pre- " fer death to the torment of gratitude. Shall I " say more? Absolved at the tribunal of the Colaos, " the act which preserved my life, would wound " me mortally. If the law which condemns me, " be just, why should the legislator dare to infringe " it? If it be not so, why am I here? Let this " law be abrogated, and let me be conducted to " punishment; at this price I shall die content, " and bless the destroyer of my family. I have " done."

The fate of Sunni was now referred to Prince Yu, and this was his answer: " I had already " determined on thy sentence before I had heard " thee; thy boldness has made no change in my " purpose. I have been the instrument of thy " misfortune, I hesitate not to repair it. Re- " spectable old man, I kiss thy feet; forgive me, " if thou wouldst have me rise. Hear me! I " swear never again in my life, to mount a car; I " will never take a step without being reminded, " that I deprived my country of two citizens. " There remains to thee, a son, whom I have

" deprived of his mother; from this day, he is my
" brother. Speak again, inspire me with thy elo-
" quence, so that my sovereign, my father, may
" listen to me, and that the citizen, who is not
" born a prince, may not be degraded from the rank
" of a man. Sunni, you weep; embrace me, Sunni."

And now to finish my story, with something less sad and solemn, let me here record what the Baron d'Holbach said once to a new coachman, at his first entering on office: "I dismissed your
" predecessor, because he contended for prece-
" dence with a hackney-coach; I will not have
" you contend for precedence with any one. If
" you knock down or hurt any one, I send you
" off that instant; but not till you have first had
" a hearty thrashing." But the Baron went still further; he quitted his carriages himself, leaving them entirely at the disposal of his wife and children, and has since always gone on foot, enjoying his health the better for it.

January, 1772.

The world has just sustained a very unexpected and premature loss in the death of M. Helvetius, which happened on the twenty-sixth of December last, in consequence of the gout struck in; he was only fifty-six years of age. If the term of a *true gentleman* was one that did not exist already in our language, it must have been invented in order to apply it to him, for he was the very prototype of that character. Just, indulgent, free from

all ill humour, free from gall, of a perfect equanimity in his intercourse with the world; he possessed eminently all the social virtues, and he owed them very much to the view which he took of human nature. It appeared to him not more reasonable to be very much disconcerted with a bad man who might happen to cross us in our way, than with a stone out of its proper place. The habit which he had contracted of generalizing his ideas and of only seeing great results, in rendering him sometimes indifferent to good, rendered him also the most tolerant of men. Yet this tolerance was extended only to the private vices of society, for as to the authors of the public ills, he was for burning and hanging them without mercy. In no case did he love palliatives, and he never failed to recommend the last remedies, consequently the most violent; nor could much be said against his ideas were it not that it is by no means in every case very easy to apply them.

M. Helvetius's family was originally of Holland. His father, I think, was the first who settled in France, where he practised as a physician with great reputation. He died first physician to the late Queen, and was a particular favourite with her; the son was equally patronised by her till the fatal publication of his book upon *The Mind*. He had enjoyed the post of steward in her household, which he was then obliged to resign. M. Helvetius, if I am not mistaken, commenced his studies under the Jesuits, in the College of Louis the great. No

great expectations were formed of him in his youth; he was extremely subject to catch cold, which occasioned a stoppage in the head that gave him a heavy look, and rendered him dull and stupid. To make amends he succeeded very much in bodily exercises; he was handsome and well made, and excelled particularly in dancing. He carried his passion for this exercise to a great length, and it is confidently said, that he even danced three or four times at the Opera in a mask, instead of the celebrated Dupré. He obtained the place of a farmer-general while he was very young, a favour which is almost a matter of course to the sons of the first physicians. Endowed with the exterior advantages of person, and the still more attractive ones of fortune, it was scarcely possible that his youth should not be passed in the pursuit of pleasure, and he appeared for awhile destined only to lead a life of idleness, voluptuousness, and dissipation; the life of one of those persons of affluence, at Paris, whose great object is to collect good company about them, and who give them the best cheer possible. M. Helvetius had a great advantage over many of those with whom he associated, in possessing a most noble and generous heart. He could not fail of making a large fortune in his post of farmer-general, but he employed it in the most liberal manner; without abridging any of his pleasures he gave away a great deal, and in the most simple and liberal way imaginable. Even at an early age he lived much among men of letters,

and indeed provided for several of them, particularly for the late Marivaux and M. Saurin. He not long ago made the reflection, that he had preserved very little connection and intimacy with his old friends, without its being in any way his fault. "Yet many of them were under great obligations to you," said the Baron d'Holbach, "while "I, who have never done any thing for mine, continue to live with them, the same as I have done for twenty years past." A singular contrast between two persons, both of great merit, both rich, and who had passed their lives very much among the great literati.

M. Helvetius's prevailing passion was for women, and he carried it to a great excess, in his youth. I have heard him say, that for many years, this was the first and last occupation of the day, without precluding any opportunities that might offer in the intervals. His handsome person was often the means of introducing him to some piece of good fortune. His first exercise in this field, was with the Countess d'An...., a woman of a very singular character, endowed with a certain degree of eloquence, and who prided herself on being an atheist, as others pride themselves on being Jansenists or Molinisits. He was afterwards the avowed lover of the Duchess de C...., who was, like the Countess, gifted with a natural eloquence, and who had generally more than one love affair on her hands: this was not necessary to sanction her lover, in engaging in other in-

trigues, not omitting a certain number of the Cyprian corps always in his pay. But since, in all these affairs of the heart, constitution, and the love of pleasure, held the place of sentiment, our epicurean philosopher was undisturbed by those delicacies and refinements which torment real lovers so powerfully; he had even no belief in their existence; and when M. de Buffon said, that in love, the physical part, alone, was a real good, he derived the maxim from the Helvetian code. Passing his life, thus only among women of gallantry, without principles and without morals, he believed all women to be the same, and that they thought only of sensual pleasures. A discreet and chaste woman was in his eyes a monster which had no actual existence; in this respect, his notions were so confined, that he could not feel that there might exist, and ought to exist, an infinite variety in the moral character, as in the physical organization.

A thirst of reputation at length surprised him unexpectedly, in the midst of his voluptuous career. The renown acquired by three men, Maupertuis, Voltaire, and Montesquieu, excited in him an ardent desire to distinguish himself in the same brilliant career. The charlatanism of Maupertuis had brought geometry into fashion; the women were all bit by a passion for the society of geometricians, and it was the height of *bon ton* to have them among the parties at all suppers. Helvetius observed one day, that Maupertuis, one of the greatest charlatans of the age, who was always

distinguished by something odd in his dress, nevertheless, in his promenade, at the Thuileries, was constantly surrounded by all the great ladies at court, and by all the leading women of the city, caressing and cajoling him. The fact was, that Maupertuis sighed above all things for distinction, and if he had been dressed like other people, he would never, in these promenades, have been an object of attention. This made a deep impression on the mind of Helvetius, and he thought, for fashion and distinction's sake, of applying himself to geometry; but it should seem, as if the study did not answer his purpose, since we find him abandoning it very soon. The mania, indeed, began to die away as soon as the fickleness of Maupertuis transferred it to the Prussian court. Helvetius then seeing the brilliant career that Voltaire was running, thought of opening himself, in that way, a road to fame, and of turning his attention to poetry. He wrote a poem upon *Happiness*, which was extremely extolled by the literati, with M. de Voltaire at their head. It is said that this poem is to be consigned to the press, under the auspices of M. de Saint Lambert; but judging from the fragments that I have seen, I doubt much, whether it will ever have a run.

All these essays were only indications of the secret uneasiness which preyed upon the mind of Helvetius, in the midst of pleasures, and the distractions attendant upon the sort of life he led.

But the total change which took place in his life, was produced by the appearance of a work which has produced great revolutions in the minds of more than one person. The success of the *Spirit of the Laws*, made M. Helvetius aspire to the honor of producing a quarto volume, and of immortalizing himself by some philosophical work of considerable extent. From that moment he resolved to change his mode of life entirely. M. de Montesquieu's work was published in 1749;—in 1750, M. Helvetius resigned the place of farmer-general, and married Mademoiselle de Ligniville, a young woman of quality, in Lorraine, very poor, but extremely handsome. After his marriage, he shut himself up almost entirely, at his seat in the country, where his time was divided between study, shooting, and the company of his wife. A very small number of friends went occasionally to see him and interrupt these têtes à têtes;—without ever being necessary to him, they were always received with kindness. His stay at Paris was, from this period, confined to a short time in the winter: it has been said, that one reason of his quitting the gay world, was anxiety to preserve a young and beautiful wife, from the dangers of seduction; and it is highly natural for those men who have been themselves the most formidable to the order of husbands, to be under very alarming apprehensions for themselves, when their turn comes to be enrolled in the fraternity. These apprehensions, however, do not make a man quit an advantageous

post, which brings him in a large annual revenue, with very little trouble. A more noble idea actuated the mind of our philosopher; he wished to raise himself a column by the side of that of M. de Montesquieu: he failed, however, in his object. His work on *The Mind*, appeared ten years after the *Spirit of the Laws*, but did not procure its author the high reputation to which he had looked forwards; the celebrity it acquired was principally derived from the persecution it drew upon him. At the court of the Queen and of the late Dauphin, M. Helvetius was regarded as a son of perdition, and the Queen pitied his unhappy mother, as if she had given birth to Anti-christ. The Jesuits were the first to cry out, although the author had practised great forbearance towards them, and had even calculated upon their support: they engaged him, a few days after the publication of the work, to sign a most humiliating recantation of the principles, promising, that no farther notice should then be taken of it: but no sooner was this act of weakness known, than all the assess were desirous of giving the author a kick with their heels, and every one gratified himself with this pastime. The Jansenists would not leave the Jesuits in sole possession of the honor of having thundered upon the occasion; and it was not without much trouble, that the Parliament was brought to consent to the book being burnt, without the author being cited to appear before them. The book is generally regarded as containing

principles very dangerous to morality; how absurd! In the first place people will not understand the real signification of terms; in the second place it is very little in the power of any book to corrupt the morals of a whole nation, as unfortunately it is little in the power of any philosopher or moralist, how eloquent soever may be his writings, to improve them. This power belongs to the government alone, and it is after their action and reaction, that the public morals take their just level of wisdom or corruption; books have nothing to do with the matter.

Poor Helvetius was exceedingly astonished to find himself treated as a poisoner of the minds of his readers, when his only idea had been to deviate from the beaten road; the desire of placing objects, on which the minds of so many men of distinguished talents had exercised their pens, in a new point of view, was the rock on which he split. He ran into paradoxes which did not give true philosophers a very high idea of the depth of his judgment, or the accuracy of his reasoning, but which they were far from considering as any subject of reproach to his heart. Nothing was wanting to M. Helvetius but genius, that dæmon who torments us;—one cannot write for immortality unless inspired;—one may make some noise for the moment, obtain some transient success, but one is not inscribed in the list of those privileged beings whom nature has from their entrance into the world, destined to immortality. M. de

Buffon used to say that *Helvetius had better have given another yawn and written a book less.* This sarcasm may appear harsh in the mouth of a friend, but it is very true that if the *Spirit of the Laws* made a revolution in our philosopher's mode of life, the book on *The Mind* made a total revolution in his character. He had flattered himself that it would open the doors of the Academy to him, and finding that instead of literary honours it brought him nothing but persecution, he became somewhat cynical; but this did not affect the real kindness of his disposition. The storm continued for about six months; all was then forgotten, particularly at Court, as it commonly happens in that land of vicissitudes and eternal revolutions. The mind of Helvetius, however, unable to recover from its astonishment at events so unforeseen and unexpected, belived for a long time that the Queen, the Dauphin, the Court, the Jansenists, the Jesuits thought of nothing, talked of nothing, but his book. He neither knew men nor business, and those who were not accustomed to his manner of generalizing ideas, and looking only to the last results, which were commonly equivalent to a cypher, might very well, in hearing him reason, take him for a person in liquor, who talks at random; added to which he was neither brilliant nor even very agreeable in conversation. He was however a good husband, a good father, a good friend, a good man.

He had been for a long time much troubled

with the gout, a very common effect of intemperance, and it generally appeared with a most unfavourable aspect, attacking his head, his chest, or his stomach, before it flew to the extremities. It is very much supposed that his life was shortened by his immoderate pursuit of pleasure in his youth; nay it has even been whispered that he made use of medicines to restore that vigour of constitution, which began to be impaired; this was an infallible means of shortening his life. He was of a robust make, and seemed likely, if he had lived with more prudence, to have lasted to a great age. After the Peace of 1763, he made a visit to England, and another to the King of Prussia at Berlin and Potsdam; this Monarch, it is said, was not very much pleased with him. He had always a great taste for the English, and this taste was not altered by his journey to London. At his country seat, Helvetius lived in a very hospitable manner, and during the time that he spent at Paris in the winter, foreigners were received by him with the utmost politeness. Nobody was more easy of access, or of greater equanimity in his general behaviour. His stay at Paris seldom exceeded four months; the rest of the year was passed in the country, where his time was divided between study and shooting. He had been occupied for some years on a work which is finished, and is entitled: *Of Man, of his Intellectual Faculties, and of his Education.* This book which is at least as extensive as that on *The Mind,*

will, I believe, be published very soon, but in some foreign country. Its boldness and freedom would have involved the author in new troubles, if it had appeared during his life; its circulation will scarcely be permitted in France. To judge of it by what I have seen, I should doubt whether it will even obtain as much popularity as *The Mind.* M. Helvetius leaves a widow in deep affliction for his loss, and two rich daughters, each of whom will have at least fifty thousand livres a year; they may therefore have their choice of husbands.

I have mentioned M. Saurin as among those who were under obligations to M. Helvetius, and if I am not mistaken, he received from him a regular pension of a thousand livres per annum. Since the patron's marriage, their great intimacy had somewhat subsided, but M. Saurin always conducted himself towards his benefactor with gratitude, free from servility, while the latter never suffered the title of benefactor to make him forget the equality of friendship. M. Saurin dedicated one of his plays to M. Helvetius, immediately after the persecution which his book upon *The Mind* had drawn upon him.

The following stratagem was employed by the King of Prussia, to draw the Marquis d'Argens back to Potsdam, in 1766. He had given him permission to go and make a visit in Provence, his native country, when fearing that the bright sun by which that delicious spot is warmed, would

have powerful attractions for the Chamberlain, who was one of the most chilly of men, that he would grow accustomed to it and not like to return, he was resolved to find the means of preventing his farther stay. He accordingly sent the Marquis's valet-de-chambre several copies of a printed document, purporting to be an injunctiou from the Archbishop of Aix, against the Marquis's writings, ordering the valet-de-chambre to put one of these upon his master's chimney. The artifice succeeded; the Marquis, alarmed, packed up his things immediately and set out without losing a moment of time for Potsdam, not confiding to any one the motive for his hasty departure, and changing his name in travelling through France. At every place where they stopped for the night, the valet took care to give one of the injunctions to the inn-keeper, with orders to him to give it to the Marquis casually, as one of the productions of the day. This made the Marquis increase his haste to regain a country where the sun indeed is not so bright as in Provence, but where he had no fear of the Archbishop and his injunctions.

An Englishman who was about to cross the Alps, having stopped at Ferney, to see M. de Voltaire, in taking leave of him, asked if he had any commands for Italy. The patriarch requested him by all means to bring him the ears of the Grand Inquisitor. The Englishman when he arrived at Rome, talked of this commission in seve-

ral companies, till at length it reached the ears of the Pope. When the Englishman had an audience of his Holiness, after some other conversation, the latter asked him whether he was not charged with some commission? The traveller understanding from this question that the Pope knew the story, smiled; upon which his Holiness said: *I beg you to let M. de Voltaire know that the Inquisition has for a long time had neither eyes nor ears.*

February, 1772.

A good citizen of the street Saint-Honoré succeeded with some difficulty in getting a place, at the fifth representation of the Opera of Castor and Pollux, in the box upon the second story, which is called the coach, because it is large, and is commonly crammed full of company, so that they are almost heaped one upon the other.—Having placed himself there, he found himself exceedingly crowded and incommoded, particularly as he was very bulky. He held out however tolerably well during the first act, but in the second, when he saw the funeral procession of Castor come upon the stage, he exclaimed: "*Well let him stay that likes, for my part I have had enough!—I have paid my money, I have been half stifled, and almost crushed to death, and all to see what I could have seen at my own Church of St. Roch any day for nothing!* So saying, he rose up and went away, nor was it possible

to prevail upon him to stop and witness poor Castors's resurrection.

The ballet of the Devils in Castor and Pollux having been very ill managed for several days at the Opera, the devils dancing any way but the right, Sophy Arnoud said: *They were in such confusion with the arrival of M. de Vauguyon, that their heads were quite cracked.* M. de Buzançais, and the Prince of Nassau, who is not acknowledged in Germany, having lately fought a duel, some one said in the presence of Sophy, that the former had hesitated exceedingly before he determined whether he would fight or not, and this seemed the more extraordinary, as he was well known to be exceedingly skilful in the use of arms. "*It is,*" said Sophy, "*that great talents always require great solicitation.*" After the disgrace of M. de Choiseul, snuff boxes were made upon which there was on one side, the head of Sully, Minister to King Henry the Fourth, and on the other, that of the degraded Duke. *It is well done*, said Sophy when she saw one of these boxes—*the receipts and expenses are put together.*

March, 1772.

Armand Jerome Bignon, Master of the Ceremonies to the King, Counsellor of State in Ordinary, Librarian to his Majesty, a Member of

the French Academy, Honorary Member of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres, provost of the Merchants in the city of Paris, died the eight of this month, of an inflammation in the chest, aged sixty-one. The post of librarian has become, as it were, hereditary in his family; the deceased was the fourth of his name, who enjoyed it in succession, and the reversion of it has been secured to his son for a long time. I mentioned, on a former occasion, what the Count d'Argenson said when he succeeded to the office: "*You have now, my cousin, an excellent opportunity afforded you of learning to read.*" It does not appear, however, that M. Bignon took advantage of the opportunity and profited by it; his genius was not sufficient to carry him so far. He owed the seats he held at the French Academy, and at the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres, to being the King's Librarian. With regard to the first, it was said that he was chosen a member of the Academy, because it was necessary to have a cypher to make up the number forty. But this reason will not pass current, for if all the cyphers of the Academy were to be enumerated, they would make forty millions instead of only forty. We have seen how the magistracy of M. Bignon, as provost of the Merchants, was immortalized by the disasters of the celebrated thirtieth of May 1770. The old parliament occupied itself for a long time in investigating the cause of these disasters, and decided at last that

the dead were all in the wrong, since there had been nothing alleged, which could inculpate any body. M. Bignon was therefore continued in his place for two years longer, but death would not permit him to serve them out. It is said that, during his magistracy, the city of Paris has paid off debts to the amount of ten millions of livres. If this be so, and above all if it be his work, I shall be somewhat reconciled to his memory, notwithstanding that I had vowed eternal hatred to it, because the very next day after the catastrophe of the thirtieth of May, he was at the Opera, in the city box, displaying his blue ribbon with as much composure and pomposity, as if nothing had happened. Such a saving is indeed one of the highest eulogiums that can be passed upon an administration, in which for a long time nothing has been seen but idle expenditure.

Lately have been published, *Letters from the Chevalier de Boufflers during his Travels in Switzerland, to the Marchioness de Boufflers his mother.* These letters are ten in number, and make a pamphlet of twenty-six pages 8vo. In reading them, it appears very obvious that they were not intended for publication. Though written with great negligence, the same originality, the same pleasing vein is to be observed that distinguishes the other writings of M. de Boufflers, and which will rank him one day with Chaulieu and Le Fare. His prose is not less pleasing than

his verse. "*Princes,*" he says, "*require much rather to be amused than adored; God alone is so all-sufficient to himself that he can never be weary with the homage paid him.*—In another place, "*I observe,*" says he, "*that wherever great men are to be found, there also we find beautiful women; whether it be that the climate produces the effect in both cases, or that the latter go in search of the former; but this is an idea that decorum will not permit.*"

The laws of the Swiss are severe, but they have the pleasure of framing them themselves, and he who is hanged for transgressing them, has the pleasure of seeing himself obeyed by the executioner.—It is some years since the Chevalier de Boufflers was in Switzerland. He took it into his head to pass for a portrait painter, and was so successful that in many places he passed even for a good painter. He generally travelled on horseback, perfectly contented to take the weather as he found it. He set out last year, with the intent to fight among the confederate troops in Poland, but it should seem as if their measures and their manners did not please him, since he never joined them, but remained at Vienna. Here he pleased much, and indeed wherever nature is held in estimation, and above all, a very precious kind of nature, he cannot fail to please. I have seen him since his return from Vienna, and he appears to have contracted more seriousness and dignity of manner. I do not know whether he has unlearnt

to crow like a cock, and bray like an ass, in both of which he used to excel; he had at that time a vein of liveliness and humour, which were irresistibly fascinating. He was formerly apprentice Bishop in the Seminary of Saint Sulpitius, but instead of devoting himself to the study of theology, he was alway's riding about the streets of Paris, upon an enormous horse, till at length convinced how little he was calculated for the crosier and mitre, he changed them for the Cross of Malta. He entered into the service about ten years ago, and is at present Colonel Commandant of a regiment of Hussars, if I am not mistaken.

A work has been published within a few days, entitled *A Philosophical and Political History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in both Indies,* six large volumes 8vo. This book is difficult to be procured, and is sold very dear. It is known that it was printed at Nantes, and that the author could not himself overlook the printing; the booksellers, indeed, in their advertisement, say that it was printed without his consent; it is in consequence disfigured by a great many errors of the press, and at the end of each volume there is an errata, which seems never to come to an end. The work is generally attributed to the Abbé Raynal, but as it is very bold, and very faithful, consequently dangerous enough at this moment, it is not proper for any body to have an opinion upon the matter, or to ascribe it to any being whatever.

These sort of books do not belong to those who brought them into existence, till after their death. Be the author who he may, his production is certainly that of an honest man, of a great enemy to despotism, of one who has a vast knowledge of the political and commercial strength of the different powers of Europe. In a work of such length, it is not surprizing that there should be some inequalities of style; we often find it preaching and declamatory, with little management in the transitions. The ideas are rather those of a good man than of a great philosopher; the views taken of things are more humane than properly philosophic, than those of a man who has studied human nature, such as it actually is with care; sometimes also they are rather more those of policy than strict justice; it is probable too, that there may be many inaccuracies considering the immense varietes of details which it includes. Notwithstanding these faults which I have found in running over the work, and others which perhaps may yet be discovered, it is a capital book; such an one as I believe never would have been written any where but in France. It will make a great sensation, and it is much to be wished that the author may have sufficient leisure and courage to give it all the requisite correction, and carry it as near to perfection as possible.

The theatre of the Italian Comedy has just lost a celebrated actress, Madame Favart; she

died within a few days, of a very cruel and painful inward complaint, but she bore her sufferings with great patience and fortitude. One day, recovering from a fainting fit, in which she had lain for a long time, she perceived among those whom her danger had collected in haste around her bed, one of her neighbours dressed in a very grotesque manner; she smiled, and said she thought she had seen the straw figure of death; a characteristic idea in the mouth of a dying actress. Never could the priests engage her to abjure the stage; she said she would not perjure herself, that it was her profession, and if she recovered she should be obliged to resume it, consequently she could never with any sincerity abjure it; she would rather be refused the sacraments. When she found herself expiring, however, she said, *Oh! at present I do abjure it*. These were her last words.

Madame Favart was about fifty years of age. She was a bad actress, had a shrill voice, and her acting was low and vulgar; she was only supportable in low characters, and that not for a long time. She played a Savoyard girl, exhibiting the feats of the marmot admirably; this was her true talent. It was with this that she made her fortune, when she first appeared upon the stage in 1749, she was then called Mademoiselle Chantilly; she danced and sung, and her dance in *sabots* turned the heads of all Paris. She had just quitted the company of players, which the great Maurice de Saxe

always had as an appendage to his victorious army Mademoiselle de Chantilly's great celebrity was indeed derived from the passion with which she had inspired this hero; a passion which she could never return. This part of her romantic story gives occasion to some curious moral reflections. The hero of France, the conqueror at Fontenoy, and Laufeldt, the handsomest man of his time, was passionately in love with a little creature who was half distracted at being obliged to be his mistress for the sake of the money. She was herself deeperately smitten with a journeyman pastry-cook, a very ill-made man, by name Favart, who deserted his master's shop to write songs and comic operas, such as were at that time the rage.

This journeyman pastry-cook stole away the mistress of Marshal Saxe, one night, during the siege of Maestricht, and carried her off. The night of their escape, it is to be presumed, was very tempestuous, since the bridges of communication between the Marshal's army and Lowendahl's corps, which was on the other side of the river, were carried away; and it was feared that the enemy might take advantage of this circumstance, and falling upon Lowendahl's corps, destroy it entirely. M. Dumesnil, who was distinguished at that time by the appellation of *the handsome Dumesnil*, and who died of his expedition to the parliament of Grenoble, came to see the Marshal early in the morning. He found him sitting upon

his bed, much agitated, with his hair dishevelled, and appearing in great affliction. He began to console him, saying: "*The misfortune is undoubt-* "*edly very great, but it may be repaired.*"—"*Alas!* "*my friend,*" replied the Marshal, "*there is no* "*remedy, I am undone!*" Dumesnil continued endeavouring to re-animate his courage, and console him for the disaster of the night, "*It may not,*" said he, "*be attended with the consequences* "*which we apprehend.*" Still the Marshal was disconsolate, and continued to say that the loss was irreparable. At length, after about a quarter of an hour had passed in this way, the Marshal began to perceive that all M. Dumesnil had said related only to the bridges, when he exclaimed: "*Pshaw! who could have thought that you were talking only of these broken bridges!—it is a petty inconvenience which may be repaired in three hours; but Chantilly is gone! They have taken Chantilly away from me!*"—The hero, whom the most important military operations never could deprive of an hour of sleep, was altogether cast down and heart-broken at having been deserted by a little coquette.

Soon after Chantilly's first appearance at Paris, she married her pastry-cook, who was now become an author and a poet, and went with him into Lorraine. The great Maurice, enraged at a resistance which he had never before experienced, had the weakness to request a *lettre-de-cachet* to carry the husband away from his wife and to com-

pel the latter to become his concubine; and, what is very remarkable, the *letter-de-cachet* was granted and executed. The husband and wife were obliged to bend to the yoke of necessity, and little Chantilly was at the same time the wife of Favart and the Mistress of Marshal Saxe. She was even the cause of this hero's death. He had carried her to Chambord, and she was with him the night on which he was seized with his last illness; an illness which carried him off in a few days. History reports that his mistress replaced her illustrious lover with a little asthmatical abortion called the Abbé de Voisenon.

It seems to have been the fate of the haughty Saxon, who never suffered any repulse with arms in his hands, to have verse-makers for his rivals, and his favoured rivals. History, at least, says that he was no less jealous of Marmontel in his amours with Mademoiselle Navarre, who afterwards married a M. de Mirabeau, than of Favart in his connection with Chantilly. The Mirabeau, whom this lady married, was brother to the *friend of man;* the marriage was considered by his family as such a *mésalliance* that they were exceedingly offended at it, and the young couple, in consequence, were so much persecuted by them that the lady soon died of despair. M. de Mirabeau was obliged to quit his native country, and found an advantageous establishment at the Court of Bayreuth, where he continued to his death. He here contracted a second marriage, more conform-

able to his birth, and doubtless more satisfactory to his mind; she was a woman of good family and perfectly amiable. And though it be very possible for a woman of the most obscure birth, to be of distinguished merit, it is not according to our notions to conceive that she can have had an education which will compensate to a man of family the sacrifices he has made to a mad passion.

I am wandering however from my subject, to which I now return. The Count de Saxe was addicted, by preference, to low company among women, and even among men. This was in great measure pride; he would not have been misplaced upon a throne, and with a soul of this description a man does not find himself pleasantly situated in the anti-chamber at Versailles, or at those suppers at Paris, where reigns a perfect equality. As to Madame Favart, I never remember her handsome; she had no talent for real comedy, and she ought to have quitted the stage long ago. It is true, that of late years she has seldom performed, authors not having been desirous of seeing her put into any character, of consequence, in their pieces; she had an excellent talent at contributing to the damnation of a piece. Her husband was the only person who had the politeness, as bound by the laws of conjugal affection, to give her the first characters in his compositions; but this piece of pious attention had a great influence upon their success.

July, 1772.

The celebrated physician, Silva, in a journey he was obliged to take to Bordeaux, was consulted during his stay there by the whole town. The prettiest women flocked around him complaining of weak nerves, with which they were exceedingly tormented. Silva made no answer, and did not prescribe any remedies. Pressed for a long time to explain the reason of his silence, at length he said, with a very oracular tone and manner: *These are not nervous complaints, they proceed from the falling sickness.* The next day there was not a single woman in Bordeaux who complained of her nerves; the fear of being suspected of a frightful malady, cured them in an instant. The conduct of Silva was that of a man of acuteness and penetration; pretty women wish to interest, they do not wish to terrify.

The name of Ninon de l'Enclos is too celebrated to seek in the present day to make it known. All the *beaux-esprits*, all the philosophers of the age of Louis the Fourteenth, and of the present, have been emulous to contribute towards immortalizing her name. M. de Voltaire has just now taken it into his head to make her the heroine of a comedy. Ninon having, towards the close of her life, seen the patriarch, while he was yet only the young Arrouet, scarcely ten years old, prophesied his future fame, and, at her death, left him her library. The legatee has waited till he is nearly

of the same age before he thought of introducing his benefactress upon the theatre.

The subject of his piece is the well known story of the *Two Deposits*. A person of the name of Gourville, as the poet tells us, having confided a part of his property to the care of this woman, so notorious for her gallantry and her philosophy, and another part to a man who had the character of being very devout, the latter appropriated the property confided to him to his own use, while the former, who was considered as little scrupulous on the score of morals, surrendered up her trust very faithfully. If I recollect rightly, the faithless depositary was a priest, a confessor and director of souls of great credit in the quarter; but M. de Voltaire, to accommodate the story to the theatre, has only made him a churchwarden, affecting great devotion, but a thorough knave at heart, who sought even to possess himself of the other half of the trust by making proposals of marriage to Ninon. The latter appears to lend a favourable ear to him, and so unmasks the cheat, after having produced a second will of Gourville's which annuls the first. I do not know whether such a transaction would be valid in a court of law, to make an infamous hypocrite give up a deposit of which he was already in possession, and which had been confided to him without witnesses; but on the stage things are not examined into so strictly, and this denouement, well managed, would have been more happy than that in *Le Tartuffe*. The Abbé

de Chateauneuf, a friend or a lover of Ninon, relates that Molière, who was accustomed to consult her upon whatever he did, having read his Tartuffe to her, she treated him with the history of the deposit; an adventure which had happened to her with a rascal pretty much of the same stamp. Molière regretted much that he had not known this history before his comedy was finished, he had else perhaps superseded M. de Voltaire, in bringing it upon the stage. The piece which the latter has founded upon it, is called *The Depositary;* it is a comedy in five acts. Nothing is wanting but the true comic vein, and strength of Molière, for it to be classed with the Tartuffe; but though weak, it will no doubt please at the theatre, if performed by great actors; by actors capable of creating a character, or giving force and physiognomy to a feeble one.

M. de Voltaire sent this piece to the French Theatre, some time ago, and it was put into rehearsal, when an order was received, prohibiting its representation. The respectable body of churchwardens, and the more powerful body of devout hypocrites, were equally little inclined to be brought anew upon the stage. The Patriarch was obliged to withdraw his piece, and he has now decided upon having it printed. Perhaps, when, by this means, its innocence is known, it may have permission to appear upon the stage. The plot is feeble but the dialogue is written with more ease and nature, than any, perhaps, of M. de Voltaire's

comedies, at least of those in verse. The misfortune is, that this nature is sometimes flat, and that there are no verses which strike so as to be immediately retained. It may, however, be considered as a prodigy, single in its kind, for a man to preserve in extreme old age, that facility in writing, those powers of pleasing, of which we have every day new proofs.

I have often heard it said, that the parliament of Toulouse, in order to do honour to the memory of the celebrated Bayle, who was born in that city, but who had been obliged to take refuge in Holland, on account of his religious principles; I have often, I say, heard that the parliament ordered the dispositions he had made in his will, to be punctually complied with, although, according to the laws of the country, no Frenchman who ex-patriates himself on account of his religion, can either dispose of his property by will, or receive a legacy. Unfortunately, I have never been able to assure myself, to a certainty, whether this fact be true or not, in a country where people assert or deny things with extreme confidence, but where nothing is so difficult as to obtain a convincing proof of the fact. Be this as it may, it is well worthy of remark, how much a philosophic spirit seems to gain ground. The academy of the *Floral Games* at Toulouse, took it into their heads to give the eulogium of Bayle as the subject for the prize on eloquence for the next year; happily, so

great a scandal has been checked in the bud. On this subject the following article has appeared in the *Gazette of France*, which we know is infallible. "The academy of the Floral Games, at "Toulouse, had proposed the eulogium of Bayle, "as a subject for the prize next year; but parti- "cular reasons, which could not be foreseen, have "occasioned them to change the subject, and to "give, instead of that originally intended, *The "eulogium of Saint Exuperus, Bishop of Tou- "louse.*"

It is become the fashion for men of letters to have a great deal of ready money at their death. Report says, that twenty thousand livres were found in the possession of the Abbé de la Bleterie. At the same time, he was always complaining of poverty; he took great pains to impress every one with the idea that he was in indigence, nay, almost in misery. One day, in a house where he had supped, at his departure, one of the company gave him a shilling to pay for a hackney coach, as the weather was very bad, and it was supposed that he could not afford the expense of a coach himself. The Abbé took the shilling with gratitude and walked home; thus he obtained a double advantage. With such a spirit, it is impossible not to amass a fortune.

About two years ago, a ventriloquist esta-

blished himself at St. Germain, who has made a great noise, and has been visited by numbers of people, out of curiosity. He is a grocer, by name Saint-Gille. In general, he speaks naturally, like other men; but when he takes it into his head to exercise his internal voice, although you are close to him, and are previously aware of the thing, it is scarcely possible to persuade yourself that the sounds come out of his mouth; you think it is a voice speaking from some distance, and in a perfectly opposite direction. It is a great pity that this secret is not in the possession of a man of talents and judgment, of a philosopher, without any confident whatever. What good might not such a man do! what revolutions might he not produce! how easily might he become, in critical moments, the terror of knaves, those artisans of the public misery, and the instrument of salvation to his country. The grocer of Saint Germain has only employed his talent in frightening monks: he said one day, in a refectory where a party of cordeliers were feasting and making merry; "*it* "*were better to pray.*" The reverend fathers were thrown into the utmost consternation, and starting from table, pale and trembling, ran to the church, and began singing their psalms and canticles, like men possessed, expecting that the day of universal judgment was arrived. When they knew the cause by which their fervor had been excited, they could not, without great difficulty,

prevail upon themselves to forgive the grocer his malicious exhortation to prayer.

Fontenelle's reputation was first acquired through his work, entitled, *Dialogues upon the Plurality of Worlds.* Algarotti has imitated him, and adopted this mode of instructing ladies in the philosophy of Sir Isaac Newton. A little babbler has now arisen, who signs himself the Chevalier de S***, who plays the little Fontenelle, and the ape Algarotti, in a pamphlet of two hundred and fifty pages, entitled, *Our Afternoons in the Country.* It is a collection of dialogues with a marchiones, upon questions of physic and agriculture. I have not been inspired by it with any wish to mingle in the society of these good people: the circle consists, besides the marchioness, of her physician, and of a physiologist, his friend, who has accompanied him. I had much rather pass my evenings with another proser, with whom I have no more acquaintance than with the Chevalier de S***, but who appears to me a good kind of man, without pomp or pretensions: where this is the case, many things may be overlooked, there is no great harm in being flat. My good proser published last year, *Winter Evenings, or a Collection of Morality put into action.* It has the following preface, in which I delight exceedingly.

"The minister of a little village was once "reading the gospel for the day, in a missal "which was extremely worm eaten. Wherever a

" word was obliterated by the holes which the " worms had made, he substituted the word Jesus. " After the service, the lord of the village said to " him, '*My good sir, it appears to me, that there* " *is more about Jesus in the Gospel for this day,* " *than in any other; at least, the word Jesus* " *occurs very often.*'—'*Sir, sir,*' *answered the good* " *priest,* '*at least that word is as good as any* " *other.*'—Reader, I am that good priest, and this " tale is my history. It is possible that the words " *humanity, benevolence, justice, virtue, honesty* " may be too prodigally scattered over this collec- " tion; if so, reader, I can only say, *that they are* " *as good as any others.*

In the golden legend of 1772, the Abbé Desforges, Canon of Estampes, with his flying car, must not be forgotten. If the magnificent promises made of travelling in the air, at the rate of thirty leagues an hour, could not gain attention amidst the hurry and bustle of Paris, I find that, to make amends, it has occasioned a great sensation in foreign countries; and that, in many places, they are expecting to see the Canon Desforges arrive in his aerial gondola. His first essay, however, did not prove fortunate. He was carried in state, by four peasants, to a hill near Estampes, but as soon as the gondola was released, that and the poor Canon fell together to the ground; the latter, however, came off with only a slight contusion on the head; he will never be burnt for a

sorcerer. His knowledge in magic is reduced to a very simple matter: he has constructed a sort of gondola, of osier, to which he has affixed wings, and it has, besides, a parasol of feathers; he seats himself in it, with two long oars, made of feathers, and hopes, by rowing with them, to support himself in the air, and cut his way through it. The miracle is not yet accomplished, but it may be; and the good Canon's faith is not at all shaken by the fall that shook his head.

For the rest, this is not the first time that the Abbé Desforges has made himself a subject of conversation: about twelve or fifteen years ago, he wrote a pamphlet, to prove, that every Catholic priest was under an obligation to marry a Christian girl. The court of Rome not being persuaded by this edifying production, procured him a lodging in the Bastille, whence he was, after awhile, removed to the Seminary at Sens. While he was going through his penances in these places, having had leisure thoroughly to examine the *loves of the swallows*, he wrote a poem upon the subject, which he was desirous of printing. It was not found to contain any heresies, but was so full of absurdities and of luscious details, that the publication was prohibited under pain of being shut up anew, and that for life. It is since that time that he has taken to mechanics: his first idea was to put wings upon a peasant; he covered him from head to foot, with feathers, and taking him to the top of the church steeple, required him to throw

himself off into the air. The peasant had, however, the good sense to refuse complying with the requisition, and return the Abbé his feathers. The project of the flying gondola, was then conceived by our mechanic, and he proposed a subscription for carrying it into execution. It is easy to be conceived, that the gondola is very likely to carry him to the mad-house.

October, 1772.

A singular phenomenon has appeared at the opera within the last few days. The great Vestris, called by his brethren, the *god of dancing*, has been replaced by a child of twelve years and a half old, who dances with equal firmness, equal agility, and almost as much power as the *deity* himself; nor does the latter appear in the least humiliated at finding himself almost superseded by a child. It is, that this child is not only his *élève*, but his son, the fruit of the pure blood of the gods, allied with that of the great Terpsichore Allard, who would have been the first female dancer of the day, had not proud Germany produced the sublime Heinel, who has come to France to dispute the laurels with her, nay even with the mighty Vestris himself. The latter being by birth a Florentine, France is, properly speaking, only the theatre of emulation between two foreigners, who have carried the mechanism of their art as near as possible to perfection.

No priest having sanctioned the transient

union between the *god of dancing* and his Terpsichore, the birth of the young Vestris is not acknowledged by the laws; but nature who loves to console by her favours, the severity of our institutions, has been lavish of her gifts to him, and endowed him with the talents both of his father and mother. The public, to consecrate such a prodigy, has surnamed the child, *Vestrallard*. Judge what these transcendent natural endowments must have become, under the culture of such a tender and enlightened father: they say that the young *deity* resembles the old one so perfectly, that in seeing him dance, any one might very well suppose it to be Vestris himself, seen through a glass which shortens the object, and throws it into the distance. The *Mercury of France* has complimented the father and mother of this prodigy, highly, upon the success that has attended their offspring; but this offspring not being owned either by the church or the laws, the partisans of good morals have exclaimed against this as not decent; and it is supposed, that the Mercury will be paid for its compliments, by a censure from the Sorbonne, or by a fulmination from the Archbishop of Paris. The appearance of the little *Vestrallard* upon the stage, has deprived us at once, both of the father and the mother; the father having given up his engagement to the son, and the chaste mother not daring to appear, lest she should be received with applauses, which would quite overpower her modesty. If all the children that Mademoiselle

Allard has had by different fathers, should appear to be blessed with equal talents, the Opera will have no occasion for any other nursery to supply the vacancies that time is constantly making.

The French Academy celebrates, every year, the festival of his Majesty, in the chapel of the Louvre, by a high mass, with music, in which a panegyric of Saint Louis is introduced; the next day, the preacher and his sermon are commonly forgotten: the case has been far otherwise, this year. The panegyric was delivered by the Abbé Maury, a canon, and vicar-general of Lombez; it was received with the warmest applauses; that is to say, there was such clapping of hands in the chapel of the Louvre, that it might have been supposed a playhouse. Nor has this success been confined to the delivery of the oration: as a composition, it has not been less admired since it was printed: the Academy even thought it necessary to consecrate, as it were, a success so extraordinary, by some extraordinary step; and a letter was written on their part, to the Cardinal de la Roche Aymon, who has the chief disposal of ecclesiastical benefices, recommending the orator to his notice; the prelate has, in consequence, promoted M. de Maury to an abbey. It is certain, that the panegyric of Saint Louis is written in a style of superior brilliance; the author possesses great dignity of language, united with ease, and a great choice of words. It is not the less true, that the

age of pulpit oratory is past, and that they are to be pitied who embrace the ecclesiastical profession.

It is amusing to see how our orators, in pronouncing the panegyric of Saint Louis, torment themselves about the chapter of the Crusades. Most certainly this is a subject truly sublime, for one who is sincerely a Christian. What can be finer for poetry, for sacred eloquence, than that holy enthusiasm which inspired all the Christian princes, all that warlike nobility, ardent in the true faith, to rescue from the hands of infidels, the country which had been the theatre of that incomprehensible mystery, the redemption. Never was a war undertaken from motives more noble, more august, and of a more sublime character; and, if it was the occasion of disorders, of excesses, of humiliations, has not the orator a right to make them disappear before the general grandeur of the cause? It is true, that philosophy contemplates these enterprizes with a different eye, and in a manner more conformable to sound reason; but it is the height of absurdity in our orators, to aim at being half philosophers, half Christians, to condemn the Crusades, yet make the following them a theme of panegyric in the Saint who conducted the enterprize. The labours of the Abbé Maury to treat this subject in a new taste, are well worthy of attention. The art he has displayed upon this occasion is particularly admired; but for my part, I do not hesitate to pronounce, that

I am less pleased with what he has said upon the Crusades, than with any other part of his oration. Let a man expatiate to raw and uncultivated peasants, newly converted to Christianity, upon the piety and virtues of Saint Louis, and hold him up as a model for imitation, it is well;—but before men of cultivated minds, before an enlightened assembly, to represent Saint Louis as a great king, as a man superior to his age, as a legislator of genius, as a hero worthy the admiration and gratitude of all generations, may almost be called insulting their understandings. What value is it possible to put upon a king, who was, with the utmost difficulty, restrained from turning Dominican? Read the institutes of Saint Louis, and you will see what a glorious age was his, what a deplorable kind of wisdom it was that dictated the laws of his days. The Abbé Maury, however, dwells much upon the people having, in subsequent reigns, claimed, upon numberless occasions, the observance of the institutes of Saint Louis. But it is by no means, a necessary consequence, that because the people were reduced to such extremity of misery, Saint Louis was a wise and enlightened legislator. He was a good, well-meaning man, who was desirous of maintaining order, and who sought to remedy abuses, as far as his confined understanding afforded him the means; who was not deficient in resolution upon the occasion, but extremely so in discernment and reason;—and who, superior to the greater part of his prede-

cessors and successors, was, upon the whole, above the level of the age in which he lived.

The Abbé Maury concluded his eulogium of Blanch, mother to Saint Louis, with these words: "This illustrious regent died from chagrin at "having ordered two unfortunate crusaders to be "hung, who first circulated the tidings that the "king had been taken prisoner at Massoura." What a noble mind thus to occupy herself with those she had too hastily ordered to be hung!—what a charming age, when people were hung for reporting that they had seen a king surrender himself a prisoner!—I am exceedingly happy at the Abbé Maury's success, I am pleased with the preferment which it has procured him, and I agree that his panegyric is hypothetically and comparatively, very fine, that his style will always prove that he wrote in a refined and enlightened age, and that he has himself, a cultivated mind. But as to panegyrics, take a specimen of the manner in which I would have them manufactured; I have just read the following in the public papers. "Catherine the Second assists at "the solemn service which is performed every "year, in memory of those who have lost their "lives in the defence of their country. The "members of the Admiralty receive their so-"vereign at the entrance of the church, and lay "at her feet the trophies which the imperial "fleets have taken in the different naval combats, "the success of which will, one day, appear as

" fabulous as the whole history of this maritime
" war. The Empress then takes the *bastarda*, or
" principal Turkish standard, and advancing to
" the tomb of Peter the Great, places the trophy
" upon it, as an offering due to the creator of the
" Russian navy." This is the true way of pronouncing the panegyric of a hero; but the orator ought to have a soul as sublime as the hero, and ought to be assured that future ages would award him the same tribute and the same homage. It belongs to Catherine alone to praise Peter, as it only belongs to a grand vicar or an official, to praise a king for saying his breviary with all the precision of a monk.

M. de Voltaire has just printed his secular ode upon the massacre of St. Bartholomew, at the end of a little tract of twelve pages, upon the subject of the suit carried on against Mademoiselle Camp; this suit has been one of the great scandals of the present year. The Viscount de B***, a young man of rank, but poor, was educated at the Royal Military School, at Paris; he then entered into the service, his first years in which were distinguished by a series of knavery and meanness. The most atrocious and the most public of all his misdeeds, was that to which Mademoiselle Camp fell a victim. The young Viscount, when staying at Montauban, became extremely intimate in the family of this unfortunate lady. He called himself a Protestant, and under that character married

Mademoiselle Camp, according to the rites of the Protestant church, that is to say, without the interference of the catholic priest; he had one child by her, a daughter. After having lived with her publicly, as his wife for some years, at Montauban, during which he spent all her fortune,—after having in consequence of his irregularities and his debts, been for some time imprisoned at Fort l'Evêque, he quitted his confinement to marry another woman, at Paris, according to the established rites, treating his union with Mademoiselle Camp, only as an affair of concubinage. The atrocious code with regard to protestantism, established by Louis the Fourteenth, at the instigation of the *devout* Maintenon, to the eternal shame of France, supported admirably the conduct of young B***, which in other civilized countries, would have led him to the galleys, at least, if not to the scaffold. His marriage with Mademoiselle Camp, was declared null, by a decree of the new parliament; nay, this body not only also adjudged damages and interest to a man who was never worth a penny, but with a barbarity wholly new and unheard of, as if the poor young woman's case was not already hard enough, ordered that her child, a little girl between three and four years of age, should be taken from her, and educated in a convent. It is said that this decree was dictated and determined on at the archbishopric, and the latter clause savours of it very strongly.

From this statement it will appear how worthy

the affair was to be treated by the advocate-general of the human race; how well adapted it was to call forth the eloquence of the philosopher of Ferney. But by a fatality wholly inexplicable, the cause of Mademoiselle Camp has been much better defended by the Advocate Linguet, whose moral character is so much decried, than by the defender of the Calas family. It is, alas! that this defender, every stroke of whose pen ought to be traced for immortality, has been for some time arraigned, and convicted, upon charges of singular cowardice. He braved the ancient Parliament, exposing himself more than once to its resentment; and he not only is forbearing towards the new, but carries his pusilanimity so far, as to become its panegyrist, in the fear lest he should be persecuted by it upon the borders of the grave. Oh Patriarch, Patriarch! it was more pardonable in Horace to praise his benefactor Octavius, in spite of his crimes, than it is in you to justify, without any worthy motive, so abominable a decree. Why were you not silent, if you could not or would not sacrifice to truth? No one asked your opinion upon the scandalous conduct of a rascal towards an amiable and injured young woman; why then leave to Linguet the honour of having been more eloquent than you in behalf of innocence, after having been for sixty years, successively, the defendant of the cause of humanity? What a fall!

For the rest, that part of the decree which

ordered that the child should be taken away from the mother, has not been carried into execution, and probably will be waved. As the mother will never submit to it quietly, they will perhaps blush to employ force against a victim already so cruelly treated. It is some satisfaction that this victim has found a support, a defender; M. Vanrobais, an old man turned of seventy, was united to her, a few days ago, at the Chapel Royal of Sweden, securing to her a happier lot than she has hitherto experienced, and a more honourable name than that which her infamous husband has impressed with so indelible a stain. The Messieurs Vanrobais are foreigners and protestants, who having established those fine manufactories of cloth, at Abbeville, in Picardy, have not only been allowed the free exercise of their religion, but are also permitted to have a chapel, with a chaplain, for their private use.

November, 1772.

One day when the Emperor Joseph the Second was walking in the Prater, as he often does alone, without any suite, he met a young woman whom he did not know, and who seemed in great affliction, I think she was even lamenting her fate very bitterly, without suspecting by whom she was overheard. Joseph approached her, and enquired into the cause of her lamentations. The young woman perceiving a person unknown to her, who seemed to take an interest in her sorrows, related

to him with much simplicity, that her father, an officer in, I know not what regiment, having been killed in the service of the Empress-Queen, her mother having no one to protect her, or take any interest in her behalf, had fallen into great distress, and this had been considerably increased by the late scarcity. She added, that having been supported principally by the work of their own hands, this resource was now about to fail, since the hardness of the times daily diminished the number of those by whom their works could be purchased, so that she was fearful they might soon be reduced to the utmost misery. The emperor inquired whether they had ever received any assistance from the government?—She answered *none*.—He then inquired why her mother had never thought of soliciting the emperor for relief, as he was so easy of access?—They say he is avaricious, she replied, and we therefore thought that such a step would be useless.—The monarch profited by the lesson thus innocently given him; he gave the young woman some ducats and a ring, telling her that he had the honour of being in the Emperor's service, and would endeavour to recommend her to his Majesty. He then appointed a day and hour, on which he desired her to come, with her mother, to the Emperor's apartment, as he should be on duty that day, and he hoped he might be able to bring her some good news. He added, that she need only present the ring he had given her, she would then be admitted into the

Emperor's private apartment, where, he concluded, "*you will find me.*" The young woman thought she had been talking with a tutelary angel, nor was she mistaken, and hastening home immediately, imparted the fortunate adventure she had met with to her mother. The Emperor, in the mean time, made enquiries into the truth of the young woman's story, and finding it confirmed, he waited for the moment he had appointed to receive her in his private apartment. She did not fail to come, with her mother, in hopes of finding her benefactor, and returning him the ring; she indeed knew him again the moment she saw him, but at the same time she perceived by the respect paid him, that it was the Emperor himself. She then called to mind what she had said on the subject of his avarice, and turned pale with apprehension. His Imperial Majesty bade her not be alarmed, and then informing the mother that he had settled a pension upon her, from the army funds, he turned to the daughter, and said: *Another time I hope you will not despair of a heart that is just*; words worthy of being inrolled in the archives of humanity. Such is the fact, as related in several of the public papers, last year.

An anonymous author has thought this a proper trait to be introduced upon the stage, and expected that it would produce a great effect. He wrought it up into a comedy of three acts, in ten syllable verse. He rightly judged, however, that it was impossible to entitle his piece

Joseph the Second, and removing the story back, for some ages, he has called it *Adeline* or *Albert the First*. Except this change of names, he has scarcely altered any thing, but given the fact just as it stands recorded above, so that there is a very direct eulogium of the Empress Queen, Maria Theresa, of Madame the Dauphiness, and by a sort of rebound of the Dauphin and Louis the Fifteenth. Notwithstanding these passports, and the well-intended aim of recommending to sovereigns the practice of justice and benevolence, and of teaching subjects to set a due value upon a just and beneficent sovereign; the author still thought it necessary to ask the consent of the Count de Mercy, ambassador from their Imperial Majesties at Paris, to its being represented. The answer of his Excellency was, that there was nothing in his instructions which seemed to oppose the representation of Adeline. The Censor of the police approved of the piece, and M. de Sartine signed the permission for its being represented. It was in consequence put into rehearsal, and announced as to be played on the twenty-sixth of October last, when, on that very night, an order from Fontainebleau arrived forbidding the representation.

Our poets seem in a vein of bringing the adventures of sovereigns upon the stage. It is related of the late King of Prussia, that having one day met with a young country girl, tall and well made, and thinking that a fine breed of

children might be raised by marrying her to the first *Flugelmann* of his tall grenadiers, he gave her a note to carry to the officer commanding at the barrier nearest to Potsdam. The note contained an order, signed by the king, to marry the bearer immediately to the person designated in it. The young woman suspecting that there was something in the note not very much for her advantage, took the opportunity, on meeting with an old woman of her acquaintance by the way, to consign the delivery of it to her, by which means she herself escaped the husband destined for her. It is a certain M. Desfontaines, who calls himself Censor Royal and Inspector of books to be published, that has taken it into his head to bring this story upon the stage. His piece, which is entitled the *Ticket of Marriage, a Comedy in three acts interspersed with songs*, is his third or fourth sin in the dramatic line; this is enough, unless he means absolutely to die in impenitence.

M. de la Borde, one of the four first valets-de-chambre in ordinary to the King, indefatigable in tormenting us with his insipid and discordant music, has set the airs of this *Ticket of Marriage*, which, to conclude its history, was damned last night at the Italian theatre. If the Court prohibited the representation of Adeline, at the French Theatre, to make amends, it ordered the performance of the *Ticket of Marriage*. But pieces played by command seldom succeed. The reception

given to this piece, by the public, has justified the opinion formed of it by the comedians.

M. Huber, who has passed some time at Ferney, is a man of a very peculiar genius and turn of mind. Born with an intuitive disposition, as it may be called, for the arts, learning things by a sort of instinct or divination, he may be said to have discovered anew the art of painting, since, without any instruction, he has acquired a talent of forming pictures in a perfectly new style, which have vast spirit, and are extremely characteristic. They are distinguished above all by that exquisite truth and nature which recals the manner of Vandyke and other great masters, and which is far removed from the style that so grievously torments people of true taste in the French painters.

M. Huber came first into notice twelve or fifteen years ago, by his talent in cutting out; a talent at once singular and most extraordinary. With a pair of scissars, and a piece of vellum, he made pictures, the subjects of which charmed the amateurs, while the execution astonished the artists. There are things cut out by him, particularly in England, which will be shown as relics when he is himself no more. Some little things he could execute with the most astonishing facility. He had, for example, so great a knack at cutting out Voltaire's profile, that he could do it with his hands behind him, without ever look-

ing at it, nay, he would tear a card into an exact likeness of him, or take a piece of bread, and presenting it to his dog, make him bite it different ways, turning it about in his mouth, till at length a profile of the patriarch was produced. His genius was besides inexhaustible in finding new subjects on which to exercise itself; many of a very characteristic nature are well known.

Since he has quitted his scissars for the pallet, his talents have been consecrated almost entirely to M. de Voltaire, with whom he has lived eighteen or twenty years; but the latter, who is a mere child on such subjects, has always decried his pictures as caricatures. An unlucky adventure finished putting the patriarch out of humour with his Vandyke. M. Huber had undertaken to paint a series of pictures, representing his patron's domestic life. Certainly nobody ever took such striking resemblances of him. The Empress of Russia caused it to be signified to the author, that she should like to have these pictures, and that the more he executed, the more delighted she should be. M. Huber immediately sent her Majesty a sketch, which was finished off in three days, in which Voltaire was represented in bed, looking with extacy over the precious furs and other presents which he had received from the august Catherine. Though M. Huber never knew whether this picture reached the Empress, he pursued his idea, and, I believe, thinks of having the suite of scenes from the domestic life of the most

celebrated man in Europe, engraved very soon, if a certain number of amateurs will unite in forming a subscription for the purpose. He has brought them with him to Paris, they are all very faithful and characteristic, and might be farther augmented by a great many interesting scenes. In one of these pictures, the patriarch is at dinner in the midst of his disciples, d'Alembert, Marmontel, and others, who have made the pilgrimage to Ferney; the painter is there himself, nor has he forgot to introduce Father Adam. Another picture represents the patriarch's breakfast; he is standing, and takes his coffee, which is poured out by the lovely Agatha, to whom he says, every morning, "*Lovely Agatha, you charm all eyes;*" on which Agatha blushes, and hangs down her head with great modesty. In another picture, we see Voltaire in the midst of a groupe of young peasant lads and lasses, and he appears in extasies surveying the riches of the country; the company look a little as if they were laughing at him. But the picture which put the patriarch out of humour with the painter was, his rising in the morning. He is getting out of his bed, and jumping into his breeches, which is the true historical fact, dictating all the time to his secretary, who is writing at a table near the bed. This picture was stolen from M. Huber by a little rascal of an engraver, who engraved it with some verses underneath not less stupid than gross.

We have recently received from abroad a *Collection of Letters of his Majesty the King of Prussia, to serve as a History of the last War. To this is subjoined an account of the Battle of Rosbach, with several other pieces which have never before been published; the whole enriched with notes by a General Officer in the Austrian service.* A pamphlet of one hundred and eighty-two pages, 12mo. in two parts.

This correspondence is extremely interesting. I had seen it last year in Germany, but the present edition is much more correct; I suspect it to be really from Deux-Ponts, though it has the name of Leipsick in the title page. It is impossible to read half a dozen lines without being convinced of the authenticity of these letters. If any one would present us with the complete correspondence of the King of Prussia, with his Generals, during the two wars in which he has been engaged, we should have indisputably the most important and luminous work ever written upon the military art. I judge here by the specimens contained in this collection, without referring to ten or eleven campaigns which have inscribed the name of this monarch in indelible characters in the records of immortality among those of the greatest Captains that the world ever produced. It is difficult to say what is most to be admired in this correspondence, whether the accuracy of the writer's judgment, his deep knowledge of the military art,

the inexhaustible variety of his resources, or the invariable tranquillity of his mind, always superior to events, and preserving even in the most arduous situations, not merely composure, but even gaiety, or finally, his great prudence, the most difficult, in my opinion, of all qualities, to be preserved by a great warrior like the King of Prussia. It was this prudence which restrained him from following up too eagerly the victories he gained, and confined him almost through the war, to dispersing the armies of his antagonists and keeping the theatre of war as remote as possible from his own territories. He would not venture to pursue and gather what appeared the certain fruits of his victory, in order that he might be ready to fly and make head against another army which perhaps threatened him upon another point.

It were very much to be wished that other presents, drawn from the same source, should be given to the world, but it must be done, observe, without the King's knowledge. It is said that his Majesty, on the appearance of the present publication, ordered it to be burnt by the hangman, as he did formerly the diatribe of Doctor Akakia; so much is it the fate of the hangman, in all places, to burn excellent books. The Court of Vienna must be in possession of many collections of this kind. At the affair of Maxen, they must have found the correspondence of the King with General Finck. When you have read the notes which

accompany this collection, you will be sorry that there are not more; you will wish, above all things, that the author had sketched a complete picture of the whole war. These notes are very luminous and full of instruction. It may be said, that here is an Austrian General who writes extremely well in French; but I have some suspicion that this Austrian is the Chevalier de Keralio, who after having served with much distinction in France, presided successively at the education of Prince Charles and Prince Maximilian of Deux-Ponts.

Yesterday, at the moment when the curtain drew up at the French Theatre, a madman, Billard by name, mounted upon one of the benches of the orchestra, and began haranguing the pit, laying before them a formal complaint against the actors, whom he treated as jugglers, that they would not perform a piece of his, entitled the *Suborner*, which he had presented to them. The juggler, Preville, was handled with particular severity by the haranguer, Billard, who informed the pit that he was grandson to one of the King's secretaries, and rich enough to have reimbursed the players for their expenses if the piece did not succeed; he concluded by calling upon the audience for justice. In England the orator would have been made to mount upon the stage, and he would have been required to read the rejected piece aloud, when it would have been hissed or applauded, according to

its merit, and if good for any thing, the actors would have been requested to perform it. But in France, the pit, though the supreme judges, against whom there is no appeal, confines its jurisdiction to applauding the harangues addressed to it. That of M. Billard created a great tumult among the audience, and Preville was required to appear, in a very peremptory manner. He did not however make his appearance, and at length the performers succeeded, though not without some difficulty, in beginning the *Earl of Essex*. The tumult recommenced between the play and the afterpiece, and, according to custom, ended in smoke. Preville was to play the character of the *Anglomaniac*, which begins with these words: "*Pardon me if I have kept the company expecting* "*me for some time.*" A general laugh ensued, and there was an end of the matter.

The haranguer, Billard, in the mean time was arrested, as well as several of the great gentlemen-judges in the pit, who had been rather too clamorous in giving their opinions upon the matter in question. The latter were released, but the former was conducted to Charenton. He had been for some time forbidden to appear in the lobbies of the play-house, because he was always haranguing there, against the actors. When he is again at liberty, he will be prohibited going to the theatre for some time, and the public tranquillity will be restored of itself. His *Suborner* must

have been wretched stuff indeed, since the players, who risk so many miserable pieces, were afraid to venture on playing that.'

We have this year experienced an irreparable loss at the Italian theatre; M. Caillot declined returning to it any more after Easter. This actor was sublime without any exertion, and that is, of all talents, the most rare. Nobody performed with more justice whatever he undertook. Le Kain is a man of very extraordinary powers, but perhaps Caillot's powers were still more extraordinary. Caillot, at the beginning of his career, had no idea of his own talents; he thought he could sing agreeably and play with vivacity, but had no conception that he could be pathetic. Garrick, while he was in France, seeing him play, told him that he might be a great actor whenever he pleased. His essays were crowned with a success equally astonishing and rapid; he created almost all the characters he undertook. Those who have not seen Caillot in the *Deserter*, in *Lucile*, in *Silvain*, and in the *Lover at Fifteen Years of Age*, have scarcely an idea to how great perfection, the art of the actor may be carried. But in proportion as his acting advanced towards perfection, he was deprived of his voice. It became uncertain, and he was subject to frequent hoarseness; it was sometimes lost for a whole day together, but then on the morrow it would be as perfect as ever. This observation has confirmed me in my opinion

that perfection in singing and playing are incompatible. Acting is one of the greatest physical fatigues that a man can undergo; there is a certain silence of concentrated passion, which it requires more physical exertion to sustain, than to support an actual burden. These efforts in the long run must affect the voice, and the perfection of singing, requires exertions of a different kind, which interfere with the playing.

I have perfectly decided in my own mind that if ever I become a great Prince, I will attempt to revive the antique mode at the Opera; the airs shall be sung by sublime singers, concealed in snug places at the edge of the stage, while pantomime performers shall exhibit the action suited to the several characters, with all the requisite fire and force. In this way I am persuaded that I should have a most incomparable performance; I would at least make the experiment. Since the greater part of the best Italian singers are very indifferent actors, I should prefer an exhibition somewhat singular, to one that is cold and awkward; and I am well convinced that this singularity, if conducted with spirit and taste, would produce an astonishing effect, such as no one at the first glance could possibly suspect. Be this as it may, Caillot's occasional loss of voice has served him as a pretence for soliciting and obtaining leave to retire from the stage.

A pension of a hundred pistoles has been granted him, upon retiring, from the funds of the

theatre, and he is engaged to play at Court for two winters longer, so that those who would now see him, must go to Versailles. If he should be taken with a fancy to travel, he might get any sum of money he would think proper to demand. He does not retire rich, he may have an income of five or six thousand livres a year; but he is rich in the moderation of his ideas, and in the happiness he places in the mediocrity of his fortune. He lives with his mother and a sister, who carry on the jewellery trade, and of whom he is extremely fond. He loves the country, and he has a small property there. Gay, pleasant in society, aimable in his manners, possessing much urbanity, without any of the defects of people in his profession, he has combined with rare talents, the most estimable qualities, and without recollecting the sublime actor, any one may be delighted with his company.

Thiriot died a few days ago, at the age of fourscore, after having been ill for a long time. He was not a man of letters, but a sort of literary pedlar, who had made of his memory, a very instructive and interesting repertory. He knew an immense number of anecdotes of all the most celebrated persons in his time, and could repeat by heart a number of fugitive pieces of our great poets, which had never been printed. He would repeat them readily to any one who asked him, but would never give a copy; he was, indeed, I believe too idle ever to have taken them down in

writing, and I am persuaded that his whole repertory has died with him. Intimately connected for more than fifty years with M. de Voltaire, to whom this sort of sub-agent, always ready at his command, was of great use, he had stored up in his memory a great number of trifles from his playful imagination, which I fear will now be lost. He had besides a prodigious number of letters in his port-folio, in which no doubt a great many curious and interesting particulars would be found; I know, however, that since Thiriot's death, M. d'Argental has taken measures at the police, to reclaim these letters on the part of M. de Voltaire, so that we may hope this treasure will not in the end be wholly lost to us. Thiriot was a good creature as ever lived, but never having sought to make himself useful to any body, being moreover extremely idle, he lived in a state of great poverty, and quite at sixes and sevens, during the latter years of his life. He had at one time quarrelled with M. de Voltaire, and did not scruple, then to pull him to pieces as much as he possibly could, but after they were reconciled again, he was just as much at his service, as if nothing had happened. The patriarch had a long while ago procured him the post of literary correspondent to the King of Prussia, but he was pleased to quarrel also, at one period with that monarch. Some time after the last war, his Majesty reinstated him in his post, and contented himself as before with his pribble prabble; this post he retained at the time of

his death. M. d'Alembert has made interest for M. Suard to be appointed his successor. This the King of Prussia has refused, and has even condescended to give his reasons why he does not intend to appoint any one to the office vacated by Thiriot.

M. de * * * has been reproached with having read our best French authors too much, particularly Racine and Voltaire, and to have so good a memory, that he resigns himself unreasonably to their inspirations, when he is in the ardor of composition; the most striking passages in his pieces are, it is said, nothing but recollections. One day reading one of his tragedies to the Abbé de Voisenon, the latter arose from his seat perpetually, and made a low bow: "*What the devil ails you*," said the poet, "*with all your bows?*"—To which the little malignant priest replied, "*A man ought to be polite and salute his acquaintance when he meets with them.*"

January, 1773.

At his last journey to Villers-Cotterets, the Duke de Chartes amused himself with having frogs of false gold put upon his cloaths, because he was sure that at the drawing-room in the evening, he should be assailed by the ladies, who would cut off his frogs to unravel them. When they had given themselves a great deal of trouble in doing this, and mixed the false gold in their boxes well with the true, he laughed at them all

most heartily. What difference is there between cutting a frog from a coat, and appropriating it to one's own use, and putting the hand into a purse to take out some louis?—If there be any, I protest it is beyond the reach of my understanding to discover it.

Alexis Piron has at length paid the debt of nature; he died the twenty-first of this month, at the age of eighty five, after having suffered very much for several weeks. He was tall and robust, of a strong constitution, and a vigour of body that nothing could subdue; his eyes alone had not the strength of his other organs, and for ten or twelve years past, he had been totally blind. Burgundy is not one of the provinces, the least to be celebrated for having produced men of distinguished talents. Piron was a native of Dijon, the son of an apothecary; this was for a while to him, an inexhaustible subject of bad jokes. Those who are inclined to consider man as a mere machine, only as organised matter, would have been singularly confirmed in their hypothesis, by an acquaintance with our poet. He was a machine for firing off jokes, witty sallies, sarcastic epigrams. In examining him closely, it was evident that these things jostled each other in his head, and were always scrambling which should get the first to his lips; that it was no more possible for him not to be perpetually coming out with *bon-mots*, not at almost every moment to bring forth

epigrams, than not to breathe. Piron was a true subject of speculation for a philosopher, and one of the most singular subjects that I ever met with. His blindness gave him the physiognomy of one inspired, who issued out his satirical oracles, not of himself, but as if by some extraneous impulse. He was, in a war of wits, the most formidable combatant that ever existed; he was always sure to have the laughers on his side. Nobody could maintain an assault against him, he had always a reply ready, which knocked down the assailant. It was for this reason that M. de Voltaire was always afraid of meeting Piron, because not even all his brilliance was sufficient to repel this terrible antagonist: his arrows fell around his enemies like hail. A collection of his *bon-mots* would be precious.

Piron narrowly escaped a good drubbing in his early youth, before he quitted his native province. He had associated himself with a company of arquesbusiers at Beaune. The gentlemen of that town are not celebrated for their brilliancy, and they have the foible of not liking to hear asses talked of. Piron had an ass dressed like an arquesbusier, and carried him in his train to the place where the company was to exercise. Fortunately for him no one appeared to take the joke. In the evening he went to the play with his honourable corps. The curtain drew up, the actors spoke somewhat low, when some of the audience began calling to them to speak louder, they could

not hear. "*It is not however for want of ears*" said Piron aloud. The whole audience immediately fell upon him, and it was not without some difficulty that he escaped from their fury.

This turn for jokes, had gone near to deprive the world of a chef-d'œuvre, *the Metromania*. Piron came to Paris, but not conceiving that he had talents for any great undertaking, confined his ideas to framing amusements for the fairs. Here he made *Punch* say so many cutting things, that in the end, the police shut that gentleman's mouth, entirely, and confined the puppets to dumb shew. It was then that Sarrasin, his fellow countryman, at first an advocate, afterwards an actor at the French theatre, and one of the best actors I ever saw, persuaded Piron to attempt something in a superior style; upon which the epigrammatist wrote *The Ungrateful Sons*. I will not enter into any analysis of his works, since you know them well. *The Metromania* can never be forgotten, as long as any taste remains in France. A very remarkable circumstance attending this work, is, that Piron at first thought of making only a *vaudeville* upon the passion with which M. de Voltaire had been siezed, for the verses of a prètended beauty of Lower Brittany, which had been inserted in the *Mercury;* the beauty, however, afterwards appeared to be no other than a certain Madame Desforges Maillard, of no very good fame. *The Metromania* is undoubtedly the best comedy that has been written in the French language since the

Misanthrope, and gave Piron an undoubted right to expect a seat in the French Academy; that Academy on which he had lavished so many epigrams. This body of immortals, without rancour, did indeed name him to succeed to a vacancy, sixteen or eighteen years ago, but the King did not confirm the nomination. An old hypocrite, the canting Boyer, formerly Bishop of Mirepoix, who had at this time the disposal of the church benefices, carried his Majesty an ode which had been too famous, the work of Piron's early youth, and this occasioned his exclusion. It was, in fact, the fruit of an intrigue which had been carried on at Paris, by some literati on whom Piron had exercised his wit, and who made a tool of the Bishop. Upon this exclusion, Piron wrote the well-known epitaph upon himself:

Ci-git Piron qui ne fut rien,
Pas même academicien.

Here lies Piron who was nothing,
Not even an academician.

Madame de Pompadour, however, to make him some amends for this mortification, got a pension settled upon him. His ode, but too well known, was never printed as he first wrote it; it was originally still more licentious, and filled with images still more offensive to modesty and decorum; this will perhaps be thought, by those who have read it such as it now is, scarcely possible. All that can be urged in excuse for the writer, is, that it was produced under the delirium of a wild and ill-regulated imagination, at eighteen. Piron

was not a philosopher, he was too ignorant for that; his prevailing quality was his vein of wit, a rare and precious gift. Some years ago, he had a fancy to become devout, and composed a *de profundis;* but this character did not sit well upon him, he could never be any thing but Piron, dealing around his *bon mots.* He had a niece who kept his house for him, and whom he has made his heir: this niece had married, privately, a person by name Capron, a player on the violin, who had some reputation at Paris, but never could obtain any elsewhere. Some good-natured friend informed Piron of the marriage, in hopes of making a quarrel between the uncle and niece; but Piron pretended not to believe the story, referring always to his niece, who denied it. On opening the will, these words appeared: "*I name my niece, Madame Capron, as my heir.* This trait is that of a good-hearted man, but somewhat of an original.

The literati, his cotemporaries, had little intercourse with Piron; they feared his sting too much. Besides, among that class of men, it is not uncommon for every individual to be desirous of shining, by turns, in the circle which he frequents, and wherever Piron was, all was over with the rest of the company; there was no longer any conversation, it was nothing but the epigrammatist aiming his darts all around him. To make amends, the little yelpers in literature sought his society very much, attaching themselves to

him, no doubt, in the hope of catching his talent of biting with such keenness. Piron has died firmly convinced that Voltaire is a man of very moderate talents, quite of the common class; this is not affectation, it is his real, firm, honest, belief; and a strong proof how far blindness may be carried by men of very superior minds. Ought we not, then, to pardon and pity those vulgar beings whose heads, if I may use the expression, do nothing all their lives, but play at *cross purposes.* The truth is, that Piron had seen the author of the *Henriade* in his youth, when he was the sport of all the frivolous people of the hour, secretly oppressed by that description of men, who having very moderate capacities, wish to pass for eagles; and often giving them advantages over him, by an extreme petulance, and by running heedlessly forwards, without reflecting upon what he was about. Those who have studied mankind, and who know the vast influence which such prejudices obtain over the mind, cannot be surprized at the sentiments entertained by Piron, above all in a country where every thing, whether for or against is always carried to extremes. When Crebillon died, Piron wrote the following note, to the Marchioness of La Ferté Imbault, daughter to Madame Geoffrin, inclosing an epigram, in which he reflects, with his usual causticity, upon Voltaire's tragedies, as very meagre performances. "You have here, the apotheosis of "Crebillon, who has smoked more pipes in his

" life than Voltaire has taken *lavements*, or Piron " drank bottles. Heaven grant that his high re- " putation, as well as his wondrous passion, may " not vanish into smoke; the new editor of Cor- " neille will wish that it may be so, and for a very " good reason. I wish that the enclosed may " please the Marchioness, and for a very good " reason; still more, do I wish that it may please " the lady her mother, and that for two or three " very good reasons." Piron passed his life in constantly aiming his shafts at Voltaire, and uttering severe sarcasms against that illustrious man. It is said that he has left several, in answer to what M. de Voltaire may probably aim at him after his death. This is carrying his precautions to a great length indeed, and probably to very little purpose, since I do not believe it to be the practice at Ferney, to insult the ashes of an enemy who is no longer capable of doing injury.

It is reported, that M. de Sartine, some time since, passed a judgment in a suit, similar to that of Nicias. A man denied having received a deposit; M. de Sartine ordered him into his presence, and said, " I believe what you say, but " write to your wife, as I dictate;—*All is dis-* " *covered, and I am undone if you do not imme-* " *diately bring the deposit that we have received.*" The man immediately turned pale, for he felt that his wife, thus taken by surprise, would not fail to betray him. Every thing was, in consequence discovered, and the truth forced from a faithless

friend, by an expedient full of wisdom, worthy to be compared with the *Judgment of Solomon.*

February, 1773.

The French Theatre, desirous to celebrate the secular year of the death of Molière chose, for the purpose, the very day on which that extraordinary man died, the seventeenth of February. Two authors were candidates for the honour of this apotheosis; but by a fatality much to be regretted, neither of them were known till the present moment. It seems as if the apotheosis of such a man as Molière ought to have been the work of some of the first writers in the country, and it was left to the Abbé Le Beau, of Schosne, and M. Artaud. The piece written by the first was played on the seventeenth, that by the second on the eighteenth. The title of the former is, *The Assembly, a comedy in one act, and in verse*; the latter is called, *The Centenary of Molière*; it is also a comedy, in verse, of one act; both are followed by a divertisement, or a sort of heroic ballet, in which the apotheosis of Molière is celebrated. These pieces could not fail of success; they presented the public with an opportunity of performing an act of religion towards one of the greatest geniuses that honoured the last century; and the actors exerted their utmost to celebrate the memory of the first of comic poets.

March, 1773.

Hearts capable of feeling, must recal with pleasure and interest, the memory of Mademoiselle de la Vallière, the first mistress of Louis the Fourteenth, the model of lovers. M. Blin, of Sainmore, has just published a work, entitled, *An Epistle, in heroic verse, from the Duchess de la Vallière to Louis the Fourteenth, preceded by an Abridgment of her Life.* The subject is at least extremely well chosen for an heroic poem; next to the tender *Heloïse*, it would be difficult to find a heart more tender than was possessed by her whom M. Blin has chosen as the heroine of his epistle. It is supposed to be written at the moment when Madame de la Vallière quits the court, and executes her project of becoming a Carmelite. What a moment! I know of but one poet that ever existed, who was truly capable of doing justice to such a subject and, unfortunately, he has been dead about eighteen centuries,—I mean the sublime genius who celebrated the unfortunate Dido, the immortal Virgil. Nothing was wanting but that the Duchess de la Vallière should have been a queen, to render the resemblance perfect, between her and the lover of Eneas, but it cannot be said that M. Blin resembles Virgil. His poem has been suppressed; I know not for what reason. Must it be forbidden to speak of the loves of kings, even a century after their death? M. Blin, in his Abridgment of the Life of his heroine speaks, assuredly, in the most decent and

cautious manner possible. He has enriched his book with a very pretty engraving from a picture by Le Brun, at the convent of the Carmelites, in the rue St. Jacques, where Madame de la Vallière is painted as a Magdalen.

In proportion as the spirit of philosophy increases, the recollection of the amiable qualities of Henry the Fourth becomes more and more dear to the French nation. The reputation of this good prince is more widely extended, while that of Louis the Fourteenth, for a long time so splendid, sensibly diminishes. It may even be said, that for the last five-and-twenty years, the love of the nation for Henry the Fourth is become a sort of religious worship; his name is never mentioned without a strong emotion, without the profoundest veneration; all Europe, indeed, seems to share in this feeling. The Jesuits, and the priests who succeeded them, at the college of La Fleche, are alone to be excepted from this general enthusiasm, as the following anecdote will shew.

A man, employed in the houshold of the Count de Provence, passing not long since near the college of La Fleche, recollected that the heart of the great Henry was deposited in the church there, and would not pursue his journey without first visiting this sacred relick. He addressed himself to the sacristan, making known his wishes; but the man was more than an hour

before he could find the box that contained the treasure; at length he discovered it in the corner of a chapel, upon the ground buried in the dust of many succeeding years. The box being only of lead, gilt, did not appear worthy the care either of the Jesuits or their successor. The enemies of the society will say that the holy sons of Jesus troubled themselves only about the heart of Henry the Fourth, alive. I cannot help imagining to myself, that if some English curiosity-hunter had happened to visit La Fleche, and discovered this treasure so thrown aside and neglected, he might, taking advantage of the negligence, have put the box into his pocket, and carried it away with him to London—there it might, possibly, have been deposited in Westminster Abbey, in a splendid monument, with the history of its being discovered and brought over, inscribed upon it. Such a monument would have been a greater subject of shame and reproach to France, than all the defeats she sustained in the war for the Spanish Succession. Happily, the treasure was discovered by a Frenchman. At his return to Versailles, he related his adventure to one of the descendants of this beloved monarch, and the prince said to him;—"*I have six thousand livres, ready money in my* "*chest, take them, and provide a habitation proper* "*for the heart of so great a man.*" It must be acknowledged that the heart of this monarch, thus neglected and thrown aside, forms a cruel

contrast in a nation, and in an age, which pique themselves on never hearing his name mentioned without emotion.

An Englishman who went to visit M. de Voltaire, at Ferney, was asked by the philosopher, whence he came? The traveller answered, that he had just passed some time with M. de Haller. "*He is a great man*," said Voltaire, "*a great poet, a great naturalist, a great philosopher, a man of almost universal knowledge.*" "What you say, sir," said the visitor, "is so much the more to be admired, since M. Haller does not do you the same justice." "*Alas!*" answered Voltaire, *perhaps we are both mistaken.*"

The hotel of Mademoiselle Guimard is almost finished: if love has been at the expense of it, voluptuousness sketched the plan; and this divinity never had, even in Greece, a temple more worthy of her worship. The saloon is painted all over; Mademoiselle Guimard, herself, appears as Terpsichore, with all the attributes that can characterise her, displayed in the most seductive manner possible. These paintings were not entirely finished when she had some dispute with her painter, M. Fragonard, and the quarrel rose to such a height that he was dismissed, and another artist employed to finish the work. M. Fragonard, curious to know how his performances

were going on, in the hands of another, found means, one day, to steal unobserved into the house, and made his way into the saloon without meeting any body. Perceiving his pallet and colours in one corner of the room he was determined to be revenged, and with a few strokes of the pencil effaced the smile from the lips of Terpsichore, and gave the countenance the expression of anger and fury, without, in the slightest degree, diminishing the resemblance. The sacrilege completed, he stole away, unobserved, as he had come, when, as the ill stars of Mademoiselle Guimard would have it, she came almost immediately, with a number of her friends, who were to pass their judgment upon the talents of the new painter. Her indignation, at seeing herself thus disfigured, was without bounds; but the more she gave way to it, the stronger the likeness became. What a fine subject for the talents of M. Huber. The epigrams of painters are no less cutting and severe than those of poets.

Memorial for me, by me Louis de Brancas, Count de Lauraguais. London.

This memorial, little interesting on account of the subject, is very much so, from the oddness of the style, and the vein of pleasantry that runs through it. A man of the name of Drogard, whom M. de Lauraguais picked up in the streets of London, and made a secretary of him, as an acknowledgment of the obligation, carried off a

Mademoiselle Le Fevre, a friend of the Count's. In other words, the secretary took the liberty of uniting himself in lawful wedlock, with the lady with whom his master had lived for four years, in ties not quite so legitimate. Although the marriage was contracted without the Count's consent, he did not trouble himself so far, as to be angry about it, but quietly continued to live with Madame Drogard, upon the same sociable footing, that he had lived with Mademoiselle Le Fevre. Finding however, after a while, that the husband used his wife very ill, and that she was very unhappy, he determined to place her out of the reach of his persecutions, and carried her with him into France. For this good work, M. Drogard commenced a suit against the Count; he demanded his wife and her property back again, or else the payment of a note for two thousand louis, which the Count had formerly given to this lady. The affair was accompanied with many circumstances unnecessary to be detailed here; but one must not be forgotten; that M. de Lauraguais's memorial in justification of his conduct is preceded by a long epistle dedicatory, to his father, Louis de Brancas, a duke and peer of France. As the work is very scarce, I subjoin an extract, which will be sufficient to give an idea of the general tone which prevails in it. Never was extravagance clothed in a pleasanter or more amusing dress.

"My father; as a marriage and a criminal

" suit, are two great events in a family, you in-
" formed me of the marriage of my daughter, and
" I sent you my *billet** to the gallows. In fact
" every thing is done by a *billet* in this world.
" Have you not been asked for *billets* of confes-
" sion?—Have you not purchased *billets* for the
" play?—Have you never been paid in *billets* of
" Canada?—Have you never written *billets*?—
" Have you never received *billets-doux*. Every
" thing in short here below is done by a *billet*,
" and from the first ages, all others have been in-
" scribed in that which every one draws at his
" birth, from the great urn of fate where chance
" is mingling them incessantly.

" It results from a thousand concurrent cir-
" cumstances that England, the country of Eu-
" rope where the principles of liberty and pro-
" perty are united in the closest connection, is
" that in which it is perhaps the most difficult to
" acquire property in an incontestable manner,
" and where it is consequently the most easily
" attacked. This appears incredible, but it is
" absolutely so. A people is a collective being;
" it is free on general principles, though indivi-
" duals may be tormented by the forms which
" time and chicanery have covered with their rust.

* It has been necessary here to retain the French word *billets*. This word has a great variety of significations in the French, and is used in different ones here, so that it is impossible to find any English word which will apply to all; to give different words would totally alter the quaintness with which the author intends to write, and deprive the passage of all its spirit.

"On the contrary, among men scattered about, "as they do not compose a national body, either "they must have no social principles, or their "principles must only have a relation to each in- "dividual. You will easily conceive all the effects "that may spring up from these ideas; I offer a "seed which may one day produce a great tree, "but you know that I consume my property in "grass.

"Historians love to take Fame as the Muse "of History: they only ask for his trumpet, and "leave his scroll to the Benedictines. London is "an immense gulf, hollowed out, at first, by the "Danes and Normans, and now perpetually by the "French, in which the gold and the follies of all "other nations are constantly swallowed up. Has "an Italian or a Frenchman deserved the gallows "in his own country, he hastens into this; on "landing, he does not fail to say that he has "escaped from the Inquisition or the Bastille, and it "is sufficient that the thing is possible, to secure "its being received as a horrible truth. Has the "fugitive the art he generally possesses of exciting "the usual, though somewhat barbarous mixture of "pity and derision, he is asked to drink a pot of "beer at the first public-house, over which the "donor of the treat politely remarks that in Eng- "land they drink to liberty, in other countries they "only wish for it.

"There are three distinct species in the ge- "neral class of adventurers. One consists only of

" the apparitions of a moment: these are the cox-
" combs of philosophy, who only believe in a
" God, because they must contend that their little
" persons are divine, or at least that they are the
" work of a divine hand. Have they taken a turn
" along the streets of London, and been into
" Dollond's shop, to enquire whether they have
" any telescopes as good as those of Passeman?
" Have they carried their curiosity to so great
" a length, that they have been to Cambridge, to
" Oxford, or to Bath? They return in haste to
" Paris, to deposit under the wings of the learned
" friends, the vast treasure of knowledge they have
" collected; they hasten to enjoy in the bosom
" of society, the great consequence they have
" obtained, by acquiring a *thorough knowledge*
" of England.

" Another species of our countrymen are still
" more ephemeral. They are a set of little impert-
" tinent prigs who assume to themselves, modestly,
" to be the legislators of taste, and who with the
" utmost goodness and humility, condescend to
" try the effects of their charms upon the English
" ladies. At their return, their surgeons are
" immediately made the confidents of the success
" they have obtained.

" The next are a parcel of intriguers, either
" by profession, by interest, or by necessity. Of this
" description is a scoundrel who is pleased to speak
" well of me in a libel, in which he tears to pieces
" the being that I love and respect; who wants to

" pass for a bel-esprit, and a man of polished man-
" ners, because he is called by some scrubs, like
" himself, the Chevalier de Morande, instead of
" Morande, author of the *Gazetteer Cuirassier*, and
" many other atrocities, in which he publishes all
" sorts of scandal;—scandal so gross, that it has
" the air of being written by a hackney coachman,
" upon the memoirs of Master Gourdan's cook.

" But what advantage, illustrious Sirs, have
" your enlightened understandings over the igno-
" rance of your fathers, if the only difference
" with regard to man is, that in barbarous times he
" is the slave of prejudices, and in polished ages
" the captive of customs. What is to be done?—
" I must submit to human weakness, and since
" the Apostle says that there is no one, even among
" the elect, who does not sin seven times in the
" day, I must arm myself with patience, and be
" resigned to this lot of the blessed. May it long
" be yours and mine."

In his affidavit describing the course of his life with Mademoiselle Le Fevre, he says: " She
" made my soup and eat it with me, she made my
" bed and unmade it with me. Having beauty
" without attraction, complaisance without mild-
" ness, sallies of ill-humour without caprice, and
" the charm in my eyes of being ridiculous with-
" out being awkward, of being silly without being
" stupid, she occasioned a fermentation more salu-
" tary to my mind, than tea is to my stomach."

It is a singular thing that the fables of Esop alone have served as the foundation of the reputation of several poets; for instance, Phœdrus, La Fontaine, Hagedorn and others; and that the greater part of those who have sought to invent new subjects for fables have failed. Of this, La Motte may be cited as an instance, while, with his, other names might be joined whose failures have been less distinguished. For what beautiful imitations are we not indebted to the Bible, to Homer, and to Esop; in them are to be found every where the germs of all subsequent inventions. La Fontaine says, that "*Fiction is a country full of waste* "*lands, in which authors are every day making* "*new discoveries.*" I know not whether this be true; although, at the first glance, it may appear, that the field of fiction is infinitely more extensive than that of truth, I do not think that since Homer as many new fables have been invented, as we have seen truths discovered within the last two or three centuries.

June, 1773.

M. Guibert has read his piece, entitled the *Constable of Bourbon*, at the Palais-Royal, at the Palais Bourbon, and at all the great houses in Paris. Every where it has been honoured with the highest encomiums. A young duchess, of eighteen, not knowing how sufficiently to express the admiration with which she was impressed, said, with much *naïveté*; "*Oh! heaven! how*

" *happy a lot is it to be the mother of such a* " *man.*"

A sudden death lately carried off M. Claude Humbert Pierron de Chamousset, formerly Counsellor to the King; and Master in Ordinary in his Chamber of Accounts; a worthy and excellent citizen, celebrated by his ardour in promoting the public good. Nobody speaks of him; nobody seems to think of uttering a word of regret at his death. O Athenians! a zealous and virtuous citizen is, however, as rare to be found as a celebrated actor. We are indebted to M. Chamousset for many useful institutions. It was he who established the penny-post in the city of Paris: it was he who first circulated any knowledge of the means proper to be employed for recovering drowned persons, with a number of other projects which were mentioned in the public prints at the time when they appeared. M. de Chamousset might indeed be said to carry his zeal for public utility, even to fanaticism. This virtue has rather proved injurious than advantageous to him. His fortune has been more than once deranged in the pursuit of his projects. Malice and jealousy were incessantly throwing obstacles in his way, and he has only derived from all his labours the reputation of being a madman; while at quitting the world he seems completely forgotten. If public report is to be believed, his death was the effect of some experiments he was making in preparing medicines for

the poor; this idea alone ought to constitute him the object of eternal regret. Those who were well acquainted with him, say that his constitution had been undermined by chagrin, and that some medicines, taken improperly, brought on an inflammation, of which he died in three days.

His genius was fertile in the invention of projects of utility, but his mind wanted the preciseness necessary for entering into minute details; perhaps his character was deficient in the calmness and resolution essential to the carrying on any great enterprise. But shall we wait till we find a perfect man, to render homage to virtue?—Have we the right to be so difficult?—The memory of M. de Chamousset ought to live in every mind sensible to worth and honesty, and desirous of promoting the happiness of mankind.

As a contrast to this character, I cannot help concluding with the history of a man who came to me this winter, requesting my attention to a plan he had formed for the establishment of a free-school, in which he proposed to educate two hundred poor children to trade, mechanical arts, and political economy. The establishment was only to continue ten years, and he was to take his scholars at twelve years old; the funds for supporting it were to be derived from a tax of a halfpenny upon every lottery-ticket, public or private, issued at Paris. I immediately entered into a calculation of the receipts and expenses, and proved to him that it was impossible his plan could answer.

" Pardon me, Sir," said he, with a frankness at which I was so astonished that I have scarcely, even now, got over it. " Pardon me, Sir; the first " year indeed I cannot be a gainer, but tempe- " rance will be the primary virtue that I shall in- " culcate upon my pupils, I shall have the key of " the strong box, I shall not be accountable to " any body for the money, and in ten years my " fortune will be made, and I shall be off." His project met with no encouragement. What a difference between this man and M. de Chamousset!—We may conclude, that we are not deficient in the framers of projects, but that it is not so easy to find pure and disinterested hearts.

The Emperor of China has sent the King sixteen sketches, made by the Jesuit Missionaries, requesting that they may be engraved by our best engravers. The engraving them has cost more than a hundred thousand crowns. These sketches represent the principal ceremonies of the Court of Pekin, and different victories gained by the Emperor. A very singular part of the story in all the battles is, that in not one of them a single Chinese is killed; no, nor even wounded! Nothing was inculcated more strongly upon the persons who made the sketches than a particular attention to this very extraordinary circumstance. Is not this exactly the fable of the lion and the carver: *If we lions were the artists?*—M. Zimmerman will

not, I hope, forget this stroke in the first edition of his book upon *National Pride.*

October, 1773.

M. Laurent Agliviel de la Beaumelle, a gentleman of Gascony, educated first among the Jesuits, afterwards a Huguenot preacher at Geneva, professor of Belles Lettres at Copenhagen, a pensionary for two or three years at the Bastille, lord of a small property near Toulouse, and a man of letters attached to the King's library, but much less known from his titles than from his *Memoirs of Madame de Maintenon*, and his long quarrel with Voltaire, is just dead, at Paris, at the age of forty-two. He was, beyond dispute, of all the Titans who ever dared to make war upon the God of Ferney, the most violent, the most obstinate, the most daring; but he was also the adversary, who, of all others, was pursued by the God with the greatest hatred and anger. It may be said, that La Beaumelle is the martyr of this illustrious enmity, and that he has died himself of the poison which he had long been preparing to satisfy his vengeance. This poison, as you will presently see, was not very easy to be prepared; it was, in the first place, a critical commentary upon all the works of his adversary; next, a complete history of all his literary and civil iniquities; and, in the last place, a new *Henriade*, which was to efface entirely that which for fifty years has been

our glory and delight. All these projects are announced in a sort of manifesto, in the form of letters, which was inserted in 1771, in Freron's paper. Although at that time his pretended poem was finished, he says, modestly, that to execute the plan of a new Henriade required more talent than he had, and above all, better health. In fact, his intense application, in his retreat, had so undermined his constitution, that for some years he has not been able to sleep without opiates. The evil genius which led him into a controversy with M. de Voltaire, has been the occasion of the greater part of his misfortunes. This mighty quarrel originated in an indiscreet phrase which he suffered to escape from him, in his work, entitled *My Thoughts*. Intending to celebrate the magnificence with which the King of Prussia condescends to patronize learning, he observes: *That there have been greater poets than M. de Voltaire, but that there never was one better recompensed.* This remark displeased the Virgil of France, and prompted him to get La Beaumelle driven away from Berlin, where he flattered himself with being settled advantageously. To console himself, the young *Thinker* carried away, I know not from whence, a nymph belonging to the Opera, with whom he lived, for some time, at Frankfort. Here, reduced to the utmost misery, he could not find any other resource but to write outrageous notes upon *Voltaire's History of the Age of Louis the Fourteenth*; notes written in a style which

spleen and misery alone could inspire. This libel was soon followed by the *Eighteen Letters to M. de Voltaire*, where one cannot help admiring, amid all the impertinences they contain, a singular warmth of style, and some very poignant sarcasms. It is notwithstanding, most probable that none of his criticisms will descend to posterity.

January, 1774.

In spite of all the declamations in the world, the following truths must always be allowed. In the first place, that the feeling of our existence, that the consciousness of being, is our first source of happiness, since all the pleasing affections we are capable of experiencing have no other principle, no other measure. In the second place, and this truth is only the necessary result of the first, that this feeling, scarcely ever quits us; that it attaches itself to us even in our sufferings, and is of itself alone nearly a counterpoise to almost all the ills of life.

When this sentiment is weakened, when it begins to be extinct, it is scarcely worth calculating whether it be a happiness to live or not. This calculation was perhaps never made with more good sense and simplicity than by one of the inhabitants of the mad-house at Zurich. He was rather afflicted by imbecility than madness, and was allowed his entire liberty which he never misused. His happiness was confined solely to ringing

the bells of the parish church, but when he grew old, whether he was really less capable of filling this august function, or whether the jealousies and intrigues that reign in republics penetrate even into their hospitals, the poor creature was deprived of his employment. This stroke plunged him into the utmost despair, but without making any complaints he sought the master of the great works, and said to him, with that sublime tranquility which is inspired by a determined resolution: *I come, Sir, to ask a favour of you. I used to ring the bells, it was the only thing in the world in which I could make myself useful, but they will not let me do it any longer. Do me the pleasure then of cutting off my head, I cannot do it myself, or I would spare you the trouble.* At the same time he placed himself in an attitude to receive the favour he solicited. The magistrate to whom this scene was related, was extremely touched by it, and determined to recompense, even in the lowest among the citizens, the desire of being useful. The man was re-established in his former honours. some assistance only was ordered him in case it should be wanted, and he died ringing the bells.

M. de Beaumarchais, who was regarded with an eye of horror by all Paris, about a year ago, and whom every one, upon the assertion of his neighbour, was ready to believe capable of the greatest crimes;—M. de Beaumarchais, whom all the world

are mad after at the present moment, whose defence every one is ready to take up, had written some time ago a comedy in four acts, and in prose, called *The Barber of Seville.** It was to have been played last year at the French Theatre, when the author's adventure with the Duke de Chaulnes obliged him to withdraw it. For nearly a twelvemonth past, the public attention has been much occupied by M. de Beaumarchais, and particularly for the last four months. The publication of his memoirs has made so sudden and so complete a revolution in his favour, that the players wished to avail themselves of it, and bring out *The Barber of Seville*, well assured that in the present disposition of the public mind it could not fail of experiencing the most brilliant success.

O what sweet babes are the French people!—how easy is their anger appeased when they are coaxed!—how soon they are softened, how mild and complacent they become, when they are made to laugh!—As to M. de Beaumarchais and his *Barber*, no sooner was a rumour circulated that it was to be performed, than some said it was the history of his law suit, that the name of the principal character was *Guzman*, and that this certainly meant his judge. Others said that it was the story of a man who was always at any body's service, to do little jobs for money. As these rumours, however unfounded they were, did not fail to gain some

* Which, under the title of *The Spanish Barber*, was many years ago a popular piece in England.—*Translator.*

degree of credit, the police named a censor extraordinary to inspect the piece; the censor in ordinary being the *Sieur Marin*, who had approved it last year, and who consequently could not now be allowed to give judgment upon it. The piece was examined with the strictest scrutiny, but not a syllable could be found applicable to the author's present situation. It was therefore appointed to be performed on Saturday, the 12th, and this was publicly announced; all the boxes were in consequence immediately taken, as far as the fifth night of performance. On Friday, the 11th, however, a bill was distributed announcing that counter-orders had been received, and that the performance was forbidden. The public, no less respectful towards its superiors, than zealous on the part of its equals, sighs inwardly at this rigour, and its interest for the author is greatly increased. For my part, as I do not know M. de Beaumarchais, and have neither hatred against, or enthusiasm for him, I would prefer the not believing him guilty in any way, since that sets the mind at ease; and I am the rather confirmed in this opinion, because the furies by whom he has been pursued have not been able to prove any thing against him. I therefore regret that we have been deprived of the performance of his play.

This piece is not only full of gaiety and humour, but the character of the girl is charming, replete with innocence and simplicity. There are some very delicate touches in the characters of the Count

and Rosina, which are really precious, but which I am afraid our pit are not equal to feeling and appreciating as they deserve. I do not doubt but that *The Barber of Seville* would have been highly applauded, and yet perhaps the author would have been more indebted for its success to the interest with which he has himself inspired the public than to the real merits of the piece. They would not have been thoroughly felt till the fifth or sixth representation. M. de Beaumarchais has deposited his piece at the police, that it may be read by anybody. He says that it must be either played or judged.

Early in the present month we experienced a loss which must be deeply felt by all who are interested in the preservation of a philanthropist, devoted to the service of human nature. M. Charles Marie de La Condamine, Knight of the Royal Order of Military Hospitaliers, of our Lady of Mount Carmel, and of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem, a member of the French Academy, and of the Academy of Sciences, of the Royal Society of London, and of the Academies at Berlin, Petersburgh, Bologna, Cartona, and Nancy, died here at the age of seventy-four. His career was terminated consistently with the whole tenor of his life, in sacrificing himself to the public good, and satisfying the unbounded curiosity with which he pursued all objects that might promote it. This unbounded curiosity which had always in

view the great purpose of public utility, was carried to such an excess by him, that it became insupportable to all who could not enter into his motives;—that is to almost every body. In the midst of the bustle of a great city, in the flux and reflux of a multiplicity of business, and objects that distract the mind, where is the man to be found so just towards his fellow-creatures, that his heart is always disposed to admiration and indulgence, and rigorously closed against the impatience naturally excited by an incessant curiosity;—by such a curiosity as formed the leading feature of M. de La Condamine's character for a very long succession of years. This respectable citizen joined to the most estimable virtues a kindness of heart, an originality and suavity of mind, which rendered his society not less agreeable than instructive.

Every one knows what a change was occasioned both in his moral and physical situation by his voyage to Peru, undertaken at the instigation of the government. The idea of being useful to the *Savans* sent thither, and of contributing to the promotion of science, made him determine on undertaking it. Indeed the objects of the expedition would have failed entirely but for him. He advanced more than a hundred thousand livres out of his own property for carrying it on, without any security of being repaid; in short, neither his labour, his health, or his purse were spared upon

the occasion. All the fruit that he gathered from so much zeal, was the sacrifice of a hundred thousand livres, the loss of his hearing and of the use of his legs, perpetual quarrels with his associates who would have done nothing without him, and a number of paltry jokes made upon him by his brethren of the Academy. He was in some sort recompensed by the admiration and esteem bestowed upon him in foreign countries, and by the attachment of a certain number of friends who always remained faithful to him. After a while he was partially reimbursed for the money he spent, a yearly pension of four thousand livres being settled upon him, under the ministry of the Duke de Choiseul. But as M. de la Condamine never pursued with eagerness any thing which concerned his own interest alone, his pension was suppressed at the change of ministry, on the plea that no particular motive was assigned for its having been granted. The Duke d'Aiguillon, however, being better informed upon the subject, restored it to him about a year ago.

Nearly at the same time M. de la Condamine became so totally debilitated in his limbs, that he could no longer quit his bed, yet his intellectual faculties were not in the slightest degree impaired, and he was even more serene and gay. He passed his time in making little couplets, and in composing little tales and stories in verse. Only four days before his death, hearing that a celebrated

conjuror, by name Jonas, had arrived from England, he wrote the following lines:

When Jonas, the prophet of old,
Put to sea without boat, oar, or sail.
As in ancient tradition we're told,
He was conjur'd away by a whale.
The Jonas we see at this day,
The whale would have conjur'd away.

He saw in the public papers, that a young surgeon had discovered the secret of curing hernias, radically, by means of an operation, so as effectually to preclude all danger of a return: that he had even performed the operation with perfect success upon two men in the hospital. As among other infirmities he was afflicted after the manner in question, he was immediately seized with a fit of enthusiasm for the operation and the operator, and desired to see the young man, expressing a determination to undergo the operation himself. The surgeon represented to him that his great age rendered the experiment extremely difficult and dangerous. "It is for that reason I wish it made," answered M. de La Condamine. "If you succeed, "your reputation will be exceedingly increased, "and a discovery, precious to human nature, will "be confirmed. If we fail, all will be ascribed to "my age and infirmities; you will not suffer by it. "For me, I only risk two or three years of an use-"less life.—I will have the operation performed."

The preparations for it were made entirely

without the knowledge of his wife and his friends. His curiosity was superior to the inevitable pain he must suffer upon the occasion, and he was all the time contending with the surgeon on points of anatomy. "*Why do you take that direction?*" he said, *it is too high. Put in your bistouri*"— "*That is unnecessary Sir,*—"*I know that very* "*well, but they have raised objections to it at the* "*Academy, and you maintain that you can make* "*the wound deeper without any inconvenience;* "*one person only was of your opinion; make the* "*experiment upon me.*" The surgeon was at length obliged to speak somewhat sharply, and assure him that he would leave the operation half performed if he would not hold his tongue and be quiet. "*How then*" said he, "*am I to give an* "*account of the operation, if I do not know what* "*you are about.*" The operation was indeed attended with as much success as could be expected, but his impatience to have the wound healed, not before the time prescribed, but before that which some particular circumstances required, carried him off in eight-and-forty hours. There is reason to think that his ideas were not very clear in his last moments. He sent to desire Madame Geoffrin, whom he did not visit, and who, indeed, he knew only by reputation, to send him a confessor, who did not believe in the real presence. Madame Geoffrin referred him to the Capucins. This answer made him laugh like a madman. It

would be difficult for character to be carried to a greater length. It would also be difficult for a man to be more regretted.

The Count de Lauraguais has been returned from his travels, and his exile, about three or four months, and since that time his life has been so quiet and uniform that nobody has thought about him. A few days ago he sent the following question to the Faculty of Physic.

"The Gentlemen of the Faculty are requested "to give, in due form, their opinion upon all the "possible consequences of *ennui* on the human "body, and to what point the health may be "affected by it?"—The faculty answered, that *ennui* might occasion obstructions of digestion, prevent the free circulation of the blood, create vapours, &c. &c. and that by continuance it might even produce marasmus and death.

Furnished with this authentic document, M. de Lauraguais hastened to a commissary, whom he compelled to receive his complaint, this was in substance, that he denounced the Prince de Henin as the murderer of Sophy Arnoud, since for five months he had never stirred from her side. A very new and original sally from a little twist in the brain, which does no harm to any body.

Some years ago M. Marmontel re-wrote the Venceslaus of Rotrou, and presented it at the

French Theatre. Le Kain, not satisfied with the alterations made in his character, begged of M. Colardeau to arrange it according to his taste, subjected always to its being kept in unison with the new march of the dialogue. The most profound secrecy was observed upon the matter; in all the rehearsals Le Kain followed the character as given him by Marmontel, but at the first performance he boldly gave that of Colardeau, which was received with the most unbounded applause. The astonishment, the impatience, and the indignation of Marmontel may easily be conceived; he found it, however, necessary to repress them, when after the play was over, going into the green-room, to remonstrate against this piece of treachery, he was overpowered with compliments and encomiums upon his production, the greater part of which were applied immediately to the character of Ladislaus, and to the fine verses with which it abounded. It must be acknowledged, that for a tragic actor, the turn was sufficiently comic.

A man who should have the leisure to go about from one part of Paris to another, in search of adventures and extraordinary events, and keep a journal of them, would never pass a week without having some striking and original instance of fashionable eccentricity and madness, to note down. Without scrutinizing the interior of houses, and entering into the list of scandalous histories, the consequences of which have led to so many

fatal events, let us rather direct our attention to circumstances of a more gay, and entertaining nature, which do no harm to any body, and which perhaps merit some attention from persons of taste.

M. Le Tessier, receiver-general of the farms at Lyons, a man of considerable talents, who has a great passion for the stage, and is from head to foot an actor, has conceived the idea of adapting his voice, which is naturally extremely flexible, to reading all the parts of a play, giving to every one the tone and manner suited to the age and character. This sudden transition, without any pause or catch, has a surprising effect, and produces the most complete illusion. Not one of the characters is neglected, the full effect is given to all. His countenance, which passes suddenly to the expression proper to be given it, is always just. He joins to the perfection of reading, all the little accessaries of costume in the piece he delivers. Two sittings have sufficed to establish his reputation, and nothing is now thought of but him. Within a week after his arrival he was engaged for the whole time of his stay. Our princes must hear him, every body is inviting him to supper, it is in short quite a delirium. It must be owned, in vindication, that nothing can be more extraordinary or more delightful. M. Le Tessier excels chiefly in pieces written in prose, and that of all others which has had the greatest success is the *Honest Pauper* of M. Mercier. He has taken the liberty

of making some changes in it which do not indeed improve the work, but which abridge the action, and give somewhat more rapidity to the march of the piece. The greater part of the auditors are completely seduced by his delivery; so firmly do they believe the piece to be charming, that I am convinced that two or three persons with similar talents might, in less than a year, corrupt the taste of all Paris;—I think so at least very seriously. Even those who do not launch into praises of the whole work which they hear read, are enchanted with such a speech, with such a soliloquy, which however in their better judgment they would acknowledge to be detestable. And what is bad taste, if it be not to familiarize ourselves with productions ill-conceived, and ill-digested, and to hear them with pleasure. If pedantry be ever admissible it must be in matters of taste, at least we ought to be very scrupulous in them; the lines which fix the boundary are so delicate, I will venture to say so fugitive, and we carry our admiration and censure to such extremes, that the few oracles who direct the opinions of the multitude cannot too often recal our attention to the true principles of the good and the beautiful. I put up my prayers that M. Diderot and M. Sedaine may write plays for us which will expiate the sins of M. Mercier and others, and that they may be put without delay into the hands of M. Le Tessier, so that we may hear him without danger. There will always however be the danger of abridging his

days by every reading, since the state of irritation that he is in for an hour after it is concluded, takes away much from the pleasure of hearing him.

April, 1774.

The actors at the French theatre are preparing, as we hear, several novelties in the tragic way, against the house opens again. One is a piece in five acts, and in verse, by M. de La Harpe, and is called *The Barmecides*. It has been read in several companies, and report says, with the highest applause, though that is not always a sure indication of the reception a piece may meet with on the public stage. Having only been read in circles composed of the author's friends, what I have heard upon the subject is too superficial to permit of my hazarding a conjecture upon the probable result.

Another novelty, and which may very probably be brought out before the former, is a tragedy in four acts, and in verse, by M. de Fontanelle, author of the *Literary Gazette of Deux-Ponts*. This piece is entitled *Loredan*,—but to this child another father lays claim. The doleful M. Arnaud de Baculard, has just published a drama in five acts, and in verse, called *Merinval*, which is in fact the same story, and has at least the merit of being better versified and not sinning as to the costume. The scene is in the environs of a town in France, instead of at Venice. Not

to deviate from his usual manner, M. de Baculard has given his performance the most *sombre* hue possible. To this new production there is a long preface tolerably absurd, in which he labours hard to prove that we are in the wrong to laugh; that the taste for the gaiety and facetiousness of the comic style will ruin the nation. He finishes by adverting mildly to the plagiarism of M. de Fontanelle. Here then is the foundation laid of a literary quarrel which will not be more interesting than *Loredan* or *Merinval*, but in which the poor Arnaud de Baculard may very probably miss his aim, by giving us abundant cause to laugh at his expense. M. de Beaumarchais might very well say of him what he says of Bertrand d'Airelles; "*This man has most truly the secret of saying al-*" *ways the direct contrary to what he intends.*" "*It* " *must be owned,*" said M. d'Alembert, "*that no-*" *body ever succeeded better in the doleful style* " *than M. Arnaud, since every time that one reads* " *any thing of his, one is extremely sorry.*" He has surpassed himself in *Merinval*, for it is impossible to read it without being absolutely in despair.

It is a great mistake to suppose that being doleful, and being affecting, are exactly the same thing. Accumulating improbable horrors and atrocities is not the way to produce true fire or interest: the heart shrinks from pictures revolting to nature and humanity: and the Muses, whose office it is to soften our manners, ought not to assist in rendering them more barbarous and

ferocious. M. de Baculard was walking some time since in the Tuileries, on a fine winter's day, meditating, no doubt, some new project for encreasing his collection of proofs, and twisting himself about in consequence, in a very strange manner, "*Do you see there,*" said a person of my acquaintance, whom I met, "*Do you see there "Arnaud come hither to fill his ice-house.*"

It is the same case with the doleful style, so much in fashion at present, as with the malady which the Europeans have been so kind as to present to the unfortunate inhabitants of Otaheite. The neighbouring nations reproach each other mutually with having been the first to communicate it. The English say they had it from France, while the French as strenuously assert that they had it from England. One thing is very certain, that the contagion spreads every day.

Luxury, which insensibly enervates all our faculties,—religious despotism, which shakes the main springs of them,—political despotism which crushes them in detail,—the modern philosophy, which in making vain efforts to enlighten us, has hitherto only served to destroy useful prejudices and sweet illusions,—all these causes, however opposite they may be in themselves seem to combine towards multiplying geniuses of such a stamp as M. de Baculard. I know that the great intercourse which subsists at present among the different nations of Europe contributes much to enlighten us and increase our stock of knowledge, but I

doubt whether it be favourable to virtue and to the progress of the arts. Is not this what we observe every day in looking around us?—If the continual friction of society refines the mind and the language, does it not weaken the efforts of genius, contract the soul and chill the heart and imagination. It accustoms the eyes to contemplate with equal indifference good and evil, soon corrupts the purity of the manners, and extinguishes the national character.

The theatre of Shakespeare may be excellent for the English, but it is only the plays of Corneille and Racine that suit us, and it appears to me that we have no great reason to regret the lot which has fallen to us. When the English have attempted to imitate the regularity of our dramas they have appeared cold and languid;—When we, in our turn, have ventured on taking them as our models, we have only been extravagant, without energy or originality. *Do not,* said the good La Fontaine, *let us force our talents, we shall do nothing with grace.* This is so true, that in the greater part of our pieces, imitated from the English, our authors have even improved upon the defects of their models. Nothing can better prove how little this imitation is natural to us, than so ridiculous an accusation. It may almost be said with truth that every European blushes to be of his own country, and that we labour in concert with each other to efface all the national shadings by which we might still be ditinguished.

Nothing appears to me more amusing than the interchange of follies and absurdities established for some time between France and England. It began at the revocation of the edict of Nantes, but it never was more flourishing than at the present moment. It must certainly have begun at that time, since in a piece of some antiquity upon the English stage, a fine lady, who is dissatisfied with her waiting woman, says: "*It is really horrible that persecution has ceased in France, that one can no longer get any French waiting women, so as to be tolerably served.*"—We, in France, now set as high a value upon English postillions, as the English ever placed upon our poor Huguenot waiting maids; we have the same taste for their horses, their punch, and their philosophers, as they have for our wines, our liqueurs, and our Opera dancers. We are not less eager to learn their language than they to learn ours; we translate all their novels, they return us the compliment with most unequalled complaisance; we are mad for their steel, they are eager for our silver; we can no longer support any thing but English carriages, gardens, and swords, they cannot admire any thing but our workmen, particularly our cabinet-makers, and our cooks. We send them our fashions and in return bring back theirs;—our philosophers extol nothing but a republican government, while theirs assert with a sort of half-raised, half-suppressed tone, the rights of monarchy;—our sentimental comedies are more followed in London than at

Paris, while Romeo and Beverley draw more company here than the finest tragedies of Corneille and Racine. In short, we seem reciprocally to have imposed upon ourselves the task of copying each other, so as to efface entirely all vestiges of our ancient hatred. If it was at the expense even of a little more absurdity in both kingdoms, we should be too happy in being able, at such a price, to purchase an eternal peace.

May, 1774.

If our obscurity suffers us to enjoy in tranquillity the happiness of living unknown to our masters, it does not prevent us blessing their virtues in secret and interesting ourselves deeply in their fate. The fears, the alarms, and the hopes with which all France has just been agitated, have absorded the attention of every rank and degree among the citizens. Our pleasures, our occupations, our projects, our business, all have been in some sort suspended, and you will without doubt, readily pardon us if the expectation of so important an event has retarded the sending off our public papers. Since little causes have sometimes so much influence upon great, it is very right that the great should in their turn have an influence over the little.

On Tuesday, the tenth of this month, at one o'clock in the afternoon, Louis the Fifteenth breathed his last. During the whole course of his illness he maintained an extraordinary presence of

mind, and amidst very acute sufferings displayed a patience and courage truly heroic. Let the people, seldom unjust, but often hasty in their judgments, and still more frequently subject to exaggerate their grievances, reproach him with the weaknesses of his latter years, posterity, more equitable, will always admire in him the first virtues of a great prince, goodness and clemency. It will remember that after the most brilliant campaign, he himself offered peace to his enemies; it will not forget the sublime constancy with which, finding himself in the arms of death, in 1744, he charged his minister to send to Marshal Noailles and desire him to remember *that the Prince de Condé gained the battle of Rocroi five days after the death of Louis the Thirteenth.* It will celebrate the pious humanity with which he condescended to protect the unfortunate Calas family against the injustice of one of his first tribunals, and the superstition of a whole province; it will dare to say without fear, and without adulation, that a reign of nearly sixty years which cannot be charged with any act of hatred or violence, ought to be placed among the number of the happiest reigns. It will dare to say that a character, naturally good, being the surest counterpoise of a power without limits, a prince who never intended decidedly to do ill, and who did good whenever the flattery and ambition of his courtiers suffered him to see the means of doing it, merits most truly that history should consecrate the surname given him by the unanimous voice of

the whole nation, that of *Louis the well-beloved.* Added to these things it must be observed, that the mildness of his government was infinitely favourable to the progress of learning and philosophy. To understand how much his memory ought to be dear to them, it is sufficient to observe that Montesquieu, Voltaire, Buffon, Rousseau, d'Alembert, Diderot, Crébillon, all flourished under the shadow of his reign. If all did not enjoy their prince's favour, was it not less his fault than that of the prejudices which reign over kings as well as subjects, and which the most absolute power is forced to respect.

But in lamenting the loss that France has sustained, we must not forget that, at the very moment when we were the most overpowered by our alarms, we were consoled and revived by the affecting letter which the dauphin wrote on the very morning of the day that he was proclaimed King. "M. Comptroller-general, I beg you to distribute "two hundred thousand livres to the poor of the "parishes, in Paris, that they may pray for the "King. If you find this too much, considering "the wants of the State, you will subtract it from "my revenue and that of Madame the Dau-"phiness."

(Signed) "LOUIS AUGUSTUS."

How little faith soever we may in general have in augurs, can we refuse to place confidence in this; all Paris has been transported with it and even melted into tears. In this letter, the style of

which recalls so forcibly that of Henry the Fourth, we find an impression of the most true and sincere filial piety united with the utmost paternal attention to the wants of his people. Can a new reign begin under auspices more holy and more promising.

It is not surprising that the publication of *Montaigne's Travels* should be expected with so much eagerness; it is even less surprising that so much disappointment should have been experienced when they did appear. These travels are, in fact, nothing but a dry itinerary from which we only learn very minutely, how our philosopher found the waters that he visited, and the remedies he took in his different excursions through Italy and Germany, agree with his health. Such a detail might be very interesting to his friends during his life, but two centuries after his death, whatever respect and devotion we may have for his memory, it is difficult to feel interested by it. We love to follow Montaigne into the interior of his house, to shut ourselves up with him in his chamber, to sit down by his side at the corner of the fire, and listen in confidence to the details he is pleased to give us of his particular opinions, ideas, sentiments, and tastes, of his affections, and his most secret thoughts. Far from being displeased, I say, at the confidence and intimacy to which in this way he admits his readers, it is that sociability, that rare simplicity with which these details are given that

forms their greatest charm, and fascinates us so much in reading his *Essays*. The case is not the same with the *Travels*; there this minuteness is tedious and tiresome, because it is carried beyond all bounds, and tells us nothing either curious or interesting. If about twenty pages were selected from the two volumes, the rest would no more merit being preserved than the old lamp of Epictetus. It is not the same case with the relicks of a philosopher as with those of a saint, that we keep them though they are of no value.

Nothing appears better established than the authenticity of this manuscript of Montaigne's; but it does not by any means appear that he ever intended it for the public eye. It is very much to be presumed that the whole is a mere collection of notes which he took down hastily, or dictated to his valet-de-chambre at night, at the inns, intending them solely for his own private use, to preserve in his memory the occurrences of the day, or to instruct his family and friends of every thing that concerned him. Some time after his return from these travels he published a third book of his Essays, and a new edition of the two former books very much corrected and augmented. There are many things in these volumes evidently taken from the journal now published. This was doubtless the only use he intended to make of a manuscript, which in any other point of view, contains so little worthy of attention. The merit of discovering the lost sheep, if merit it be, belongs to

M. Prunis, a Canon regular of the Chancellery in Perigord. In going over this province to collect materials for a history of it which he had undertaken to write, he stopped at the ancient seat of the Montaigne family, at present in the possession of the Count de Segur de la Roquette, a descendant in the sixth generation, from the author of the *Essays*, through Eleonora de Montaigne, his only daughter. Being desirous of examining the archives of the family, he was shewn an old chest in which were deposited a number of papers that had been for some time sentenced to destruction. It was there that he discovered the manuscript of *Montaigne's Travels*. He obtained permission of M. de Segur to carry it to Paris, where the writing having been examined by different literati, particularly by M. Caperonier, keeper of the King's library, it was unanimously determined to be Montaigne's. A part of the manuscript, rather more than a third, is evidently written by a servant, who was occasionally, as it should appear, employed by our traveller as his secretary, and who always speaks of his master in the third person. It is obvious, however, that he only wrote what was dictated to him, since even there we find all the turns of phraseology which characterize the writings of the *Essayist*. The rest of the manuscript, where the author speaks in the first person, is written with his own hand, the autography having been verified; and in this part half the narretive is in Italian. That no doubt may remain

concerning the authenticity of the work, the manuscript has been deposited at the King's library, that it may be referred to at any time. Excepting a few leaves at the beginning, which appear to have been torn, it is quite complete.

M. Bartoli, antiquarian to the King of Sardinia, was so obliging as to undertake transcribing the part written in Italian, and has subjoined several grammatical notes which were very necessary, the text being full of different dialects, and gallicisms; M. Prunis translated this part into French. M. de Querlon, author of the *Country Advertiser*, was the editor of the whole, and has enriched the work with a long *Preliminary Discourse*, and a great number of observations; I do not think the latter will contribute towards giving it more popularity than it would obtain of itself. The following may be taken as a specimen of them. Montaigne says that his travelling companions did not support the fatigues of the journey so well as himself. On this M. Querlon observes: *Thus it is that indolence travels; it would see every thing without giving itself any trouble, it would gladly travel in its bed.* How full of wit and ingenuity is this observation; must not he who can write in such a style be allowed an excellent judge of works of taste. Again: Montaigne, speaking of the *Ruins of Rome*, says, they recalled to his mind the spectacle of many of our churches demolished by the Huguenots. On this the scholiast ingeniously observes: *That the apostles of tolerance will*

not be eager to verify this fact, which must annoy them a little, especially coming from the hand of Montaigne. A man may be allowed to be flat, to make milk and water remarks, but can never be pardoned for insinuations, at the same time so stupid and so malicious. Where does M. de Querlon learn that the *apostles of tolerance* ever approved the conduct of those who demolished churches, and disturbed the public tranquillity; this would, indeed, be a singular mode of preaching peace and charity. Far from justifying such excesses, they have uniformly condemned them with the utmost warmth, whether practised by saints, by heretics, by inquisitors, or by martyrs. But let us leave M. Querlon and his notes to themselves, and rather chat a little with Montaigne, or even with his valet-de-chambre.

When one reflects that Montaigne's Essays were for a long time the only original work that could be read in France, and that even subsequent to the ages of Louis the Fourteenth and Fifteenth, so prolific in good writers, they are still the delight of all who really love learning and philosophy; when we reflect on these things, it must surely be acknowledged that a success so unvaried is an indisputable proof of extraordinary merit. Let us endeavour to investigate a little whence that merit arises.

The pleasure we derive from Montaigne's works is perhaps the more extraordinary, since it is not by pleasing fictions, nor by a continued

interest, nor by learned researches, no, nor even by a brilliant eloquence, and less than all by a methodical arrangement that he charms his readers. His book is merely a collection of detached thoughts, he investigates nothing; he appears to resign himself wholly to the wanderings of his imagination, and running continually from one subject to another, loses himself in a maze of tales and reveries, without caring whether any one will condescend to follow him or not. Although he gives a vast variety of facts, of anecdotes, and of quotations, it is not difficult to perceive that his studies have been neither extensive nor deep. He had read nothing but some Latin poets, some books of travels, his Seneca, and his Plutarch. It is to this last writer, more particularly, that he owed the greatest part of his erudition; he had read his works repeatedly, he had made himself master of all their beauties, and he employs them with that happy choice, with that frank and simple grace which belongs only to himself.

Of all the authors of antiquity whose works have been handed down to us, Plutarch is undoubtedly he who has collected the most truths of fact and of speculation. His works are an inexhaustible mine of knowledge and of light, and may justly be called the Encyclopedia of the ancients. Montaigne has given us the flower of them, adding the most fine spun reflections, the result of his own experience. If then I would give an idea of his essays, I should be tempted to

define them as a commentary made upon himself in meditating upon the works of Plutarch;—yet here I should be wrong, for this would be to ascribe a plan to Montaigne, and he certainly had none. When he took the pen into his hand, he seems to have thought of nothing but chatting familiarly with his readers. He gave them an account of what he had read, of his thoughts, of his reflections, without any design, and without drawing any consequences from such various details; his aim seems to be the pleasure of thinking aloud, and he enjoys it at his ease. He often quotes Plutarch, because Plutarch was his favourite author; he often speaks of himself, because he was much occupied with himself, thinking that he could no way better study man than in consulting his own tastes, his own affections, and the particular course of his own ideas. The only law which he seems to have prescribed to himself, is never to speak of any thing which has not interested him deeply; thence arises the energy and vivacity of his modes of expression, the grace and originality of his language. His mind possesses that confidence in itself, and that delightful frankness which are only to be found in persons whose easy and natural movements have, from their station in life, never been subjected to the restraints arising from a confined education, and too great dependence on the world.

The extreme freedom with which Montaigne wrote, gave much negligence to his style, but it

has also spread over it the utmost strength and the most agreeable variety. There is no kind of yoke which does not weaken him who has the misfortune of being constrained by it. Homer says; *that man in becoming* a slave, loses the half of his existence. That is not less true in philosophy, and in literature, than in morals. Chains of every sort are only made for the vulgar, for beings either stupid or malignant; generous souls have no other laws but the inspirations of nature, or their own sensibility.

Montaigne lived at a time when the astonishment excited by several important discoveries, when the heat of civil wars, and the animosity of religious disputes had put France, and indeed all Europe, into a state of the greatest fermentation. It was favorable for the developement of his genius, and that, from a peculiar felicity of temperament, did not lead him to side with any party. If he complains bitterly of the troubles occasioned by the preachings of Luther and Calvin, is that fairly to be ascribed to his extreme zeal for Catholic orthodoxy?—It is much more natural to believe, that it was solely for the sake of humanity that he deplored the fatal consequences of so many religious dissensions. Perhaps also, he foresaw that the reformation, in weakening the authority of the Romish Church, would tend much less towards promoting real freedom of thinking, than to advancing the views of those sovereigns whose policy and ambition it favored. He perfectly un-

derstood, without doubt, that the priests of all sects necessarily resemble each other, and that these gentlemen, tolerant in principle, would soon cease to be so in practice. Has not experience sufficiently proved this?—It is the same case with state virtues, as with new affections, they always take the upper hand of all systems which oppose their interest.

If the form which Montaigne has given to his Essays, be the only one suited to the indolence of his character, and the vivacity of his mind, it is also doubtless that which appeared to him the best adapted to inserting all the truths he has ventured to put forth in his book. They are involved in so many reveries, in so many sportive sallies, that one is seldom tempted to ascribe any serious intentions to him. His philosophy is a charming labyrinth in which every one loves to lose himself, but of which a reflecting mind alone holds the thread, of which a reflecting mind alone can penetrate the true plan. In preserving the candour and ingenuousness of the first age, Montaigne has preserved its rights and its freedom. He is not one of those masters who, under the name of a *Sage* or a *Philosopher*, is an object of dread, he is a child who permits himself to say any thing, and whose sallies are always applauded, instead of any one being angry with them. This is so true, that when Charron wanted to reduce to a system what his friend Montaigne had said with so much licence, in spite of all his prudence and all his re-

serve, he experienced the most dreadful persecution and obloquy.

Nor must it be forgotten, that at the time when Montaigne published his work, freedom of thought and writing was in certain respects less restrained than it was afterwards; at least, it was not then viewed with equal distrust. The eyes of the Government and of the clergy were not so wide open as they are at present; the Inquisition, even more cruel in great matters, was less suspicious and less tyrannical in the detail; philosophy and religion were not confounded as they have been since the limits of their respective empires were better defined. Two very different modes of thinking, if I may be permitted to express myself thus, were allowed, the one in perfect submission to the church, the other conformable to reason. Faith, holding her power and authority of herself alone, was not supposed to have any connection with common sense; it was consequently well-understood, that a thing very absurd in philosophy, might not be less true as a matter of religion. Thanks to this arrangement, it was very allowable to advance many opinions little conformable to the doctrines of the Gospel, provided no direct attack was made upon the Gospel itself, and that the most profound respect for the Church was always professed. At present this kind of trimming would not suffice.

The Essays of Montaigne are so replete with ideas, and with ideas so bold, that in them may be

discovered the germs of all the systems since developed. It was he who opened the career to Descartes and Gassendi; it was he who formed the Rousseaus, the Humes, the Shaftesburys, the Bolingbrokes, the Helvetius', the Diderots;—however different may have been the route pursued by these respectively, all have drawn their inspirations from this fruitful source of light and wisdom. If there be no book more adapted to arranging and methodizing our ideas than *Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding*, there is none more proper for nourishing and fertilizing the mind than the *Essays of Montaigne*. With the latter we gain flesh, with the former health;—the one inspires imagination, the other judgment;—the one places you in abundance, the other instructs you how to make the best and happiest use of it.

Did no one then, it may be asked, think more deeply than Montaigne?—I cannot say; but according to my opinion, it may be safely said, that no one ever related with greater simplicity what he felt, and what he thought. Nothing can be added to the eulogium which he has himself pronounced upon his work, *that it is a book of perfect good faith.* This is divine, and it is exact.

What does all human knowledge amount to?—The circle is so confined!—And what has been done for four thousand years to extend it?—Montesquieu somewhere says, *that he was composing a book of twelve pages, which would contain all that we know upon metaphysics, politics, and morals,*

and all that great authors have forgotten in the volumes they have written upon these sciences.—I am firmly persuaded that it was entirely in his power to accomplish this great project. Since we can never flatter ourselves with being able to extend the limits within which the Human Understanding has hitherto been confined, a philosophical writer, as it appears to me, can only interest in two ways; either in teaching us to conceive more clearly the few truths we are capable of attaining, or in painting forcibly the particular impression he has received from them; this will at least serve to multiply the points of view under which we may contemplate the same object. The first manner is that pursued by Locke, the second is Montaigne's.

Not only are we incessantly repeating the same things, but they are repeated with the same spirit, and in the same manner. The greater part of our modern books are only copies, sketched from one year to another, and from age to age, upon other copies, the models for which are to be found in the most remote times. We are contented to labour upon foreign ideas, we analyze them, we arrange them to the moment, but it is very rare that we dare to paint our own thoughts, our own sentiments: It is, however, in this way alone, that we can be original and new. Montaigne is so, even in the strokes that he borrows from others, because he does not employ them till he has found an idea of his own to incorporate, or

when they have struck him in a new and peculiar manner. Besides, the great number of quotations which he brings forwards, are much rather of the spirit of his times than of ours. Great pretensions were then made to knowledge and erudition, as at present the great fashion is to play the philosopher and *bel-esprit*.

Montaigne has been reproached with his obscenities, and the same reproach has been made to Bayle, and to many other philosophers. Without attempting to justify a licentiousness with which good morals cannot fail to be wounded, I will only ask whether we ought to be surprised, if in reasoning boldly upon the vices and propensities of human nature, they thought they might permit themselves to enter into rather minute details upon the subject of a passion which has so much influence on the whole œconomy of our existence; which formed, and which continually modifies society, and is in fact, the most active and the most powerful principle by which it is moved.

Balzac and Mallebranche both complain that Montaigne is always talking of himself. They do not feel that in making us intimate with himself, he also makes us intimate with our own minds; that in shewing us how he had studied his own weaknesses, he teaches us to observe those by which we are governed ourselves. Man is a more extraordinary production than any of the numerous ones by which he is surrounded; the most useful and the most agreeable study in which we can be

engaged is the study of ourselves. This all philosophers have said, Montaigne alone seems to have believed it, as he proves by the example he has set. We do not understand any thing thoroughly but what we have decyphered in our own hearts, nor do we feel a deep interest in any thing which has not some relation to ourselves, to our existence, to our tastes, or to our happiness.

The frankness with which Montaigne entertains us with every thing that concerns himself, not only contributes to rendering his book more instructive, but it renders it also more interesting; it takes away the air of constraint which belongs to a book, and gives it all the grace, all the charms of a lively and familiar conversation: this made Madame de La Fayette say, *that there was great pleasure in having a neighbour like him.*

Self-love is never more insupportable than when it is displayed under the affectation of wishing to conceal it; it is never less revolting than when it shews itself with frankness and good-nature. Far from excluding sensibility towards others, it is often the most certain means of calling it forth. We are only interested in others in proportion to the interest we take in ourselves, and look for in consequence from them. I have always been much struck with what Jean-Jaques said to one of his friends after he had been laying open his heart to him, in an ebullition of tenderness and confidence: *Do you not love me?—You have not once spoken to me of yourself.*

June, 1774.

French gaiety can never refuse itself the pleasure of a joke. The day that the duke d'Aiguillon received his dismission, the followiug motto was thrown into the king's carriage: *Non utitur aculeo Rex cui paremus*

July, 1774.

The new edition of the *Philosophical and Political History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in both Indies*, was expected with much impatience. It has just appeared; the whole work is revised, much augmented, and made much more correct. Some very indifferent engravings are added, and several maps, which were very much wanted for illustrating the book; the latter are the work of M. Bonne. The last book of this important work is entirely new; it treats of the influence which the connection with the new world has had upon the manners, the government, the arts, and the opinions of the old. It is not the least instructive part of the work; it presents views of the greatest extent and interest; the idea that it gives in about twenty pages of all the existing governments of Europe, is traced with a masterly hand; it is the result of immense reading, of profound reflection, and of an infinity of knowledge not easy to be obtained. One is only sorry to see, that in this last book, as well as in the rest of the work, the author wanders too

often from his principal subject, to run into useless digressions, and often into declamations little consistent with the simple majesty of history. There are many sorts of works in which a certain degree of disorder may be rather pleasing. Whenever it is not the question to give the reader a general and connected view of some one great object, it is very admissible often to vary the scene, and to rove at pleasure from one subject to another; it is a journey in which we stop wherever we please, and the more variety we find, the less we are fatigued, the less ennui do we experience. It is not the same case with a history or a work of science; there, method is essential. The object is to conduct the mind towards a determinate end, and towards that end alone it should always be kept in view, and the shortest way taken to arrive at it; order is the only means of rendering the road agreeable and easy. One cannot well see an object of a great extent but by distinguishing the different parts of which it is composed, by examining them according to the connection which unites them the most naturally. Every other mode of proceeding creates confusion in the mind, and wearies instead of soothing or entertaining it.

In wishing for more method in the Abbé Raynal's work, for less eloquence and more simplicity, for less ornament and more precision, with greater correctness, we do not the less admire the sublime beauties with which it is filled. Since the *Spirit of the Laws*, our literature has not, perhaps,

produced any monument more worthy to descend to the most remote posterity, and to establish for ever the progress of light and industry among us. But however admirable it may be, speaking in a general way, it must be owned that it is a work in which there are many faults; too much laboured as to the details, too little as to the whole; wearying and painful from the very endeavours of the author to render it entertaining, and so unequally written that hereafter it will be difficult for any body to conceive it all to have been written by the same hand.

We cannot help remarking here, that a sort of planet seems to preside over the fate of books as well as of men. How many books have been burnt and persecuted even in these our days, which are not to be compared for boldness and freedom of sentiment with the *Philosophical History;* yet it is sold every where with the utmost publicity. Can it be because this book attacks all the powers of the earth with equal boldness that it is supported by all with equal clemency? Kings, ministers, priests, to all he tells the most undisguised truths, often, indeed, are the most severe aspersions cast upon them; there is nothing sacred in the eyes of the author but good morals, women and philosophers. I most heartily congratulate him however upon his performance, and bless heaven, my age, and my country for it.

ON THE ENCYCLOPEDIA.

By M. de Voltaire.

A servant of Louis the Fifteenth related to me, that one day the King, his master, was supping at Trianon with a private company, when the conversation turned first upon shooting, and afterwards upon gunpowder. One of the company said, that the best powder was made with equal parts of saltpetre, sulphur, and charcoal. The Duke de La Vallière, better informed, maintained, that to make good gunpowder, there must be one part of sulphur, and one of charcoal, to five of saltpetre dissolved with nitre, well filtered, well evaporated, and well crystallized.

"It is curious," said the Duke de Nivernois, "that we amuse ourselves daily with killing partridges in the park at Versailles, and sometimes "with killing men, or being killed ourselves upon "the frontiers, without knowing precisely the "composition which kills."

"Alas!" answered Madame de Pompadour, "the case is pretty much the same with every "thing in this world. I do not know of what "the rouge that I put upon my cheeks is composed, and I should be much embarrassed if I "were desired to explain in what manner the "silk stockings that I wear upon my legs are "made."

"It is a great pity," said the Duke de La

Vallière, "that his Majesty has confiscated our "Encyclopedias, which cost us every one a hun- "dred pistoles; we should soon find in them the "solutions of all these questions."

The King then began to justify the confiscation. He had been informed, that the twenty-one volumes, in folio, which were to be found upon the dressing-tables of all the ladies, were the most dangerous things in the world to the kingdom of France, and he was desirous of ascertaining himself, from his own observation, whether the thing was so or not, before he suffered the books to be read.

After supper, he sent three of the servants who had been waiting, to fetch a copy of the Encyclopedia, and they presently returned, each bringing seven volumes, which were so heavy that they could with difficulty, support the weight. The article *powder* was first examined, when it appeared that the Duke de La Vallière was right; Madame de Pompadour was next instructed in the difference there is between the ancient Spanish rouge still used by the ladies in Spain, and that actually in vogue among the fair sex at Paris. She learnt that the Greek and Roman ladies were painted with powder from the Murex, and that consequently our scarlet was the purple of the ancients; that there was more saffron in the Spanish rouge, and more cochineal in that of France. She found that her stockings were wove in a loom; and was in the utmost asto-

nishment and delight at the machine in which they were done. "Oh. the charming book!" she exclaimed; "Sire, you have then confiscated this "magazine of every thing that is useful, that you "yourself alone may possess it, and that you may "be the only *savant* in your dominions."

Every one of the company now began to seize upon a volume, as the daughters of Lycomedes scrambled for the trinkets brought by Ulysses. Every one found immediately whatever he looked for; those even who had law-suits on their hands were surprised to find there the decision of the case. The King read the definition of the rights of his crown. "Indeed," said he, "I know not "why so much has been said against this book."

"Do not you see," said the Duke de Nivernois, "that it is because the book is an excellent "one. No exceptions are ever made against the "meddling and the dull in any thing. If the "women seek to turn a new-comer into ridicule, "it is always because she is handsomer than "themselves."

The rest of the company continued turning over the leaves, when the Count de C.... said: "You are too happy, Sire, that under your reign, "there existed men capable of understanding all "the arts, and of transmitting them to posterity. "Every thing is to be found here from the man-"ner of making a pin to that of casting your can-"non, from the very least things to the greatest. "Thank God for having raised up in your king-

" dom those who have served the whole universe. " Other nations must either purchase the Ency- " clopedia or pirate it. Take all my property if " you please, Sire, but spare me my Ency- " clopedia."

" It is said, however," replied the King, " that in this work so necessary and so admirable " there are abundance of faults."

" Sire," returned the Count, " at your supper " there were two ragouts which were extremely " defective; we did not eat them, yet we had " excellent cheer. Would you have had all the " supper thrown away for the sin of these two " ragouts." The king felt the force of what was said, and every one was permitted to resume his property. This was a glorious day.

Envy and ignorance were however not yet subdued; these two immortal sisters continued their outcries, their cabals, their persecutions: ignorance is extremely knowing in these ways. What followed?—In foreign countries, four editions of this work, proscribed in France, were published, by which eighteen hundred thousand crowns were gained. Frenchmen! endeavour henceforward to understand your own interests better.

The life of Marshal Catinat does not offer many great events. His military career was neither long nor brilliant. With the exception of the days of Staffarde and La Marsaille, he expe-

rienced nothing but losses and reverses. It is not then so much from his actions as from his character that he merits to be known. He was devoid of ostentation as of pusilanimity, and it is only by following him into the interior of his conduct, into his private and domestic life, that we recognize in him that ancient loftiness of mind which made Jean-Jaques say *that of all our modern heroes Catinat was the only one who could be compared to the great men celebrated by Plutarch.* Sanadon, in the epitaph which he wrote for him, says: *non sibi sed Patriæ vicit*, he did not seek to conquer for himself but for his country. This is the true point of view under which the life of this respectable citizen would form a picture no less useful than interesting; but to do justice to so grand an idea the writer ought to have the eyes of Plutarch, or the pen of Jean-Jaques. We shall see how the subject will be treated by the pen of M. Guibert, who is occupied at present, it is said, in writing the eulogium of Catinat, the subject of a prize which the French Academy is to give this year.

It is undoubtedly in the enthusiasm with which M. Guibert is inspired by this undertaking that he conceived the project of consecrating the centenary of Marshal Turenne, by erecting some great monument to the memory of that illustrious commander. For this purpose he thought of proposing a subscription among the military for a statue, as the literati have subscribed for a statue

to M. de Voltaire. At first his idea was to erect a column on the spot where the Marshal was killed, and besides to have his statue carved by the most celebrated of our artists, and placed in the *Field of Mars*; added to which, he would have had a prize of a thousand crowns, given by the French Academy for the best panegyric upon his hero. The court, however, did not think proper to sanction his project. The answer given was, that it was impossible to raise more glorious monuments to Marshal Turenne than those already in existence; that he was buried in the tomb of his Kings, that his eulogium had been pronounced by the greatest orators of his age, and that the place where he was killed being out of the kingdom, the column to be erected would lead to an useless and tiresome negociation, and it was most probable that if erected, it would be destroyed at the breaking out of any new war. M. de Guibert, upon this refusal, burnt his prospectus, but it is to be hoped that he will not in like manner abandon his eulogium of Catinat. In the mean time, to fill up the vacancy till I am enabled to send you an account of it, let me have the honour of relating an anecdote of this hero which is not recorded by any of the historians, but which Jean-Jaques has often heard from those who were personally acquainted with the Marshal.

At the time when he commanded in Italy, a young officer, full of presumption, and impressed with a high idea of his own courage, came and

requested with great eagerness the honour of being permitted to serve under him. Catinat, on the faith of a physiognomy which pleased him much, accepted the young man's services, and promised him employment. A few days after, he sent him at the head of a small detachment to execute some orders. He was attacked; scarcely had the action commenced when he was wholly bewildered, he lost his self-possession entirely, and fled. His misconduct passed in the presence of too many witnesses to remain concealed; all the details of it were known to the Marshal, and he alone did not consider it with severity. He immediately himself presented the young man to the officers of his company, and said: "Gentlemen, I entreat of you "to do more justice to your comrade; I wished to "put his obedience to the test; what he has done "was by my orders." After loading him with caresses in public, he spoke to him in private, representing how much his confidence would be betrayed if he did not justify it immediately in some very distinguished manner. The young man fell on his knees, acknowledging that he owed him much, more than his life, and assuring him that he had the most ardent desire to repair his fault. An opportunity was given him the same day; he distinguished himself exceedingly in a very perilous action, and was from that moment one of the bravest officers in the army. Few instances could be cited of greater forbearance and presence of mind,—few examples more striking of that art so

rare, and so sublime, of elevating minds of an ordinary cast above themselves; or at least of restoring to a mind suffering under a temporary depression, all the energy of which peculiar circumstances had deprived it.

Mademoiselle Albert has just favoured the public with a novel, in four small volumes 12mo, entitled *The Confidences of a Pretty Woman.* This is not her first essay of the kind, but it is the only one now in existence; it is to be hoped that it will not be attended with consequences equally fatal to her as the first. Her history is as follows:

She was born in Languedoc, of a genteel family, but not very much gifted on the score of fortune. When the Abbess of Panthemont received her appointment to that dignity, she recollected that she was a distant relation of Mademoiselle Albert, and proposed to her parents to take this young lady under her protection and provide for her. The proposal was accepted with gratitude, and as Mademoiselle Albert had a good understanding, she profited very much by the Abbess's kindness. She distinguished herself so much as to be preferred to several other young ladies for a companion to Mademoiselle de Rohan, afterwards Countess of Brionne, who was entered at Panthemont, three years after Mademoiselle Albert. Nothing that she saw or heard at Panthemont escaped her; she acquired a very considerable and tolerably accurate knowledge of the town and the

court, and from what she did know she guessed at what she did not know. She had accompanied Mademoiselle de Rohan every where for about a year, when she conceived the idea of writing a novel, which was printed without any name. It was very lively and entertaining, but people thought they discovered in it many real characters, and those even of high distinction, with many recent events, too thinly veiled not to be easily known, turned into ridicule. Some persons in her confidence, jealous of the place she occupied, named her as the author; she acknowledged it, and the confession cost her her place. The work was seized, and every copy bought up, she was represented in the most odious colours, and finally sent to the Bastille. Mademoiselle de Rohan's interest procured her enlargement at the end of a few months, and she obtained permission to retire into a convent at Moulins; the same interest obtained her an annuity of eight hundred livres upon the family estates in Languedoc. She has now for some years fixed her residence at Paris, in the convent of the little Saint Chaumont.

The novel just published is very unequally written, but it is very interesting. The events are not improbable, but are too evidently arranged to suit the convenience of the author. The characters are drawn with much spirit, and well supported; the fourth volume appears to me very superior to the others. There is a truth and delicacy in the details which show the author to have a great

knowledge of the human heart. One cannot help suspecting her to have detailed what has passed before her eyes, and wishing her in consequence a happier fate. There are things which cannot easily be invented, or guessed at. Genius may of itself create sublimity, but that succession of contradictory emotions which torment a heart of sensibility when joined to feebleness of character, cannot be conceived unless something similar has been experienced. How, for example, could a young girl paint naturally the cares, the solicitudes, the hopes, the fears of maternal love? —to do this she must at least have witnessed them. One thing for which I give Mademoiselle Albert great credit is, that she has not corrected the faults of any of her characters at the end of the novel, not even her heroine's. This makes me forget that it is a fiction I have been reading.

I was told yesterday that a charming young woman, but who had no steadiness of character, such as the heroine of Mademoiselle Albert's novel is represented, was deeply impressed with reading this work, finding it but too faithful a picture of her own instability. Dissolved in tears for a whole day, she vowed and protested that she would die sooner than be any longer a reed, forced at every moment to act contrary to her resolutions. The very same evening she suffered herself to be led into the most inconsiderate step she had ever taken in her life. This is the truth, and this is the character Mademoiselle d'Albert has sketched

so well. I wish she had called her novel *The Life of a Pretty Woman*. The title she has given it is inapplicable, and announces a frivolity which does not belong to the work. This subject, treated after the manner of Fielding or Richardson, would have been sublime.

For a long time there has not been seen at the French Academy so brilliant an assembly as that of Thursday, the Sixteenth, at the admission of M. de Malesherbes. What is to others only a literary crown, has become to him a civic one, and the Academy in decreeing these honours to the magistrate of the country, to the citizen of the nation, has appeared to fulfil one of the most august functions of this tribunal, that of being supreme interpreter of the public opinion.

The sentiments of patriotism displayed by M. de Malesherbes in the most difficult circumstances, the noble and affecting eloquence which reigns in all his speeches, the extent and utility of his knowledge are not his only titles to the gratitude of learning and philosophy. If freedom of thinking has of late been much extended in France, it is very much owing to his wise and prudent administration when he was at the head of the King's library. In preserving all the appearance of great strictness, necessary perhaps in order to repress some very pernicious abuses, or at least to avoid alarming the presiding authorities, he favoured with the greatest indulgence the impression and cir-

culation of the boldest works. But for him the Encyclopedia perhaps would never have seen the light.

What particularly distinguished M. de Malesherbes' speech upon this occasion was the equally modest and dignified style in which it was composed. Less diffuse, less verbose, particularly in the parts which concerned the eulogium, his style would have had greater strength; but perhaps defect is rather to be imputed to the nature of the thing itself than to the orator. There is but one way to avoid it, and that is to make the speech any thing rather than a speech of admission. Who could better have done this than M. de Malesherbes, if he had not been afraid that this singularity would have appeared like affectation. Perhaps there never wsa any thing more flattering said to the literati than when he compared their influence upon public opinion in the present days, to that which the orators had in ancient times. "In an age," he says, "where every citizen may "speak to the whole nation through the medium "of the press, those who have talents to instruct "men, or the gift of moving them, men of letters, "in short, are to the people at large what the "orators of Athens and Rome were to the assem-"blies they addressed."

The application which he made to Kings, of the verses addressed by Virgil to the Romans, in the sixth book of the Eneid, appeared to me particularly happy. "You would not say to the "master of a great empire, that his taste, always

"correct, ought to inspire all the artists. Let us "rather say, to all Kings, what antiquity said to "Rome, mistress of the world: *Let others give "life to marble and brass, let others describe the "motions of the stars, but you, O Kings, never "forget that your employment is to govern the "people.*"

It cannot surely be with genuine seriousness that M. de Malesherbes endeavours to persuade us that when Cardinal Richelieu, conceived the project of creating a literary body in France, he foresaw clearly what a vast extent the empire of letters would one day attain in the nation he wished to enlighten. It is much more probable that if he had foreseen the consequences of this project it would never have been executed. If this minister had any remote views in forming the Academy, it was undoubtedly to unite the interests of learning with those of the ruling powers, and to confine literary ambition by a sort of chain, like that which attaches the great to the honours of a Court. But what appears more probable is, that his thoughts, far from being extended to the future or resting on great interests, were rather confined to himself, and he had no other view but to gratify his own private taste. The establishment of the Academy was probably to him only a sort of relaxation, a plaything of his supreme power, which flattered his high pretensions and soothed his foibles, and which he hoped would one day administer powerfully to his vanity. Thus it

is that even the mere whims and fancies of a statesman with an enterprising genius, have always a character of grandeur, and often involve in them the germs of the most useful and important revolutions.

The study of grammar was the great passion of the Abbé Dangeau. One day somebody was talking to him of the apprehensions entertained that some great revolution was about to take place in public affairs: *That may be*, said the Abbé, *but whatever happens, I am extremely rejoiced that I have in my port-folio at least thirty-six conjugations perfectly completed.* This satisfaction at once resembles, and contrasts, with the deep despair of some other grammarian, I cannot recollect his name, who, upon some occasion exclaimed: *No! participles are not yet understood in France!*

January, 1776.

Letter from the late President Montesquieu, to Bishop Warburton, not published in the Collection of Montesquieu's Letters.

Paris, May, 1754.

I have received, Sir, with the utmost gratitude, the two magnificent works you were so good as to send me, and the Letter you did me the honour of enclosing with them, on the Posthumous works of My Lord Bolingbroke. As this letter appears more my own than the works it accompanies, every one endowed with reason, having an equal share in them, I felt a peculiar pleasure in it.

I have read some of Lord Bolingbroke's works, and will venture to give my opinion of them very freely. Certainly they are written with great spirit, but it appears to me that this spirit is commonly employed *against* things, when it ought to be employed only to *paint* things, and according to the idea you give me of this posthumous work, he must, I should think, be affording you perpetual subject of triumph. He who attacks any revealed religion, attacks that religion alone, but he who attacks natural religion, attacks all the religions of the world. If men be taught that they have not one curb, they may think that they have another, but it is very dangerous to teach them that they have no curb at all. It is not impossible to attack a revealed religion, because it rests for its support upon particular facts, which from their nature may be disputed; but it is not the same with natural religion, that is drawn from the very nature of man, which will not admit of dispute, and from the interior sentiment of man, which can as little be disputed. To this I must add, what motive is there for attacking revealed religion in England?—It is there so much purged of every thing prejudicial that it can do no harm, and may do an infinite deal of good. I will readily allow that a man in Spain or Portugal, whom the ruling powers would burn, or who fears that he may be burnt, because he does not believe in certain articles dependent upon revealed religion, has just reason to attack it; because such an attack

may in some sort be considered as providing for his own personal defence. But the case is otherwise in England; every man there who attacks revealed religion, does so without any interest, and even suppposing that he were right at bottom, if he should succeed in destroying it, he would destroy an infinity of practical good, to establish a truth purely speculative.

March, 1776.

The Art of the Toilette, a work imitated from the English of Lord Chesterfield.

The Romans often made use of a proverb, the profound sense of which cannot be sufficiently admired: *ex pede Herculem*, Hercules is known by his foot. The Greeks—what resources are not offered by deep learning:—the Greeks said, *Imation aner*, the habit makes the man. In truth it is in little things and particularly in the choice of habits, that the characters of men are shewn the most conspicuously. Whenever the question involves matters of importance, we proceed with extreme circumspection; the great interest that we almost always have to wear a sort of disguise, makes us generally succeed in it. But in things which appear nearly indifferent, as in our dress, for instance, we abandon ourselves to our imagination, and let that take its free course; it is then that we often betray what we sought to conceal with the greatest care. From this the most fatal disorders arise. To prevent them let us endea-

vour to establish maxims so luminous, that every body may know in future what they ought to adhere to, and let us leave as little doubt upon this important subject, as the *Act of Edward the Third* has left upon the crime of High-Treason.

Dress ought to relate to the person, as style to the subject. From this principle all the rules of the art we propose to teach are derived. It is clear, for example, that the luxury of dress ought to be in proportion to the rank and fortune of the individual. While it follows this proportion, it is an useful parade, which supports the industry of the poor at the expense of the rich, and all is in right order. A woman of rank dressed like the wife of my farming man, or the wife of my farming man dressed like a woman of rank, would be no less ridiculous than sublime thoughts put into bouts-rimés, or the burden of a vaudeville in Alexandrine verse.

To women who hold the first rank by birth or beauty, we recommend an elegant simplicity of dress. A subject sufficiently distinguished in itself, has no occasion for extraneous ornaments; art may disfigure very beautiful nature, it can never embellish it. A beautiful woman being the most beautiful work of nature, her manner of dressing ought to be entirely epic, but epic like the muse of Virgil, noble, modest, and without any mixture of glitter. We interdict her consequently, under appropriate penalties, every thing of trimmings and pompoons, in a word every

thing that bears any resemblance to the *concetti* of modern literature. We exhort her to remember that it is with dress, as with modes of expression, the most simple is the only one which does not injure the sublimity of the thought, the happiest is that which incorporates itself with the thought, and does not permit itself to be discerned. We should never have the opportunity given us to say any thing of the dress of a very handsome woman, but that we cannot conceive how she could possibly have been differently dressed. We ought here to do justice to the most celebrated beauties that we have seen in France and England, and acknowledge that they of all the sex have been the persons whose dress has appeared the least ridiculous and the least studied. Delia's good sense is carried even into her dress; it neither appears neglected or studied, but is simple and modest, in that just medium which is equally removed from the extravagancies of the fashion, from that affected deviation from it which seeks to attract from its singularity, and from that disdainful negligence which announces too high an idea of her own beauty.

Our precepts will be less severe to women who are not handsome; to those whose charms rather proceed from a certain air, a *je ne sais quoi*, spread over their whole person, than from any regularity of features or dignity of figure. We readily abandon to them all the resources of art, we pardon them the inconsistencies into which they may be

led by a lively and ardent imagination. These are subjects of fancy, which are susceptible of all the attractions that the magic of style, and the variety of tone can give. Let them in their dress imitate sometimes the taste of the sonnet, sometimes that of the madrigal or rondeau, all the graces of the minor species. The young Flavia may be offered as a model to them; the care of her toilette is not the first care by which she is occupied, but it is the most pleasing of her amusements. However brilliant her dress may appear, we never find any thing superfluous; the character of her features will bear all the parade by which they are surrounded. If she owes to her ornaments a lustre she would never have had without them, it may also be said that she in return lends them a grace which they would have sought in vain elsewhere.

OBSERVATIONS *by the Translator.*

" If France has surpassed all other nations " in the sublime art of the toilette, it is undoubt- " edly because the class of women last-mentioned " by the noble author, is more numerous in France " than in any other country. The ancient Greek " head-dress assuredly is more suited to regular " beauty than our modern head-dress, but I do " not suppose there ever were modes of dress " more generally becoming to women who are " merely pretty than the prevalent modes in " France. I acknowledge that those of the pre-

" sent day, which have the defects of being gi-
" gantic and preposterous, seem calculated to de-
" stroy the physiognomy of women who have any,
" and transform them into caricatures; but it is
" not less certain that they give an appearance
" at least, of physiognomy to those that have
" none. It is also very certain that these head-
" dresses diminish the features, and managed
" with a little art, they give more roundness to
" faces which are too angular; a form much more
" common in our climate than the oval face. This
" is not the country of regular beauties, it is that
" of faces susceptible of being rendered pleasing,
" consequently one in which the art of the toilette
" must be exceedingly studied. A handsome wo-
" man is always handsome, a pretty woman must
" contrive new means continually of varying her
" appearance, certain that the endowments she has
" received from nature, can never of themselves
" please long. She must study continually to con-
" ceal with address whatever might disparage her
" charms; it is even essential to her, in some de-
" gree, to conceal those she possesses, and leave
" them, like those she has not, a subject only of
" conjecture. She must in short bear in mind that
" whatever is merely pretty, requires the attraction
" of novelty to excite attention; and it is this ne-
" cessity which gives birth to the prodigious indus-
" try with which fashions are constantly rejected
" and renewed. The most ingenious, the most
" agreeable fashions decline, after a certain time,

" and become like certain modes of expression;
" which though in the beginning perfectly original,
" afterwards growing familiar, lose their force by
" degrees, and finish by taking quite another cha-
" racter than that which belongs to them. It is
" only in France that the force of an observation
" so just and so necessary to the happiness of the
" human race has been duly felt; and our trade
" owes to it perhaps a great part of the superiority
" it has enjoyed for so many ages.—But to return
" to our author."

There is a third order of women which I will request permission to designate as neutral faces; these are women who are neither ugly nor handsome, whose only merit consists in a little lively countenance, with bright and sparkling eyes. All I can allow them, is to imitate in their dress that conciseness, that spirit and that point which ought to characterize the epigram. They must not attempt any thing more.

After thus deciding what is proper for the three classes of the fair sex to whom the study of dress is allowable, that is to say the regularly handsome, the pretty, and those that hold the middling station between beauty and ugliness, I must add that this privilege is confined by common sense to a limited number of years, beyond which it must be considered as annulled. When arrived at a certain degree of latitude, favorable winds are no longer to be expected, it is time to gain the first harbour and lower the sails.

OBSERVATIONS *by the Translator.*

" How solemnly, soever, *my lord,* has en-
" gaged to give all possible clearness to the prin-
" ciples he lays down, I very much fear that this
" passage may leave some doubts in the mind of
" more than one reader: heaven forbid, however,
" that we should accuse him of craft and want
" of sincerity, in not determining, with greater
" precision, the fatal epoch at which beauty ought
" to renounce her rights. This epoch, it is cer-
" tain, varies much in different individuals. Not
" to mention here, the instances of our Ninons
" and our Maintenons, who certainly were more
" than handsome, even at a pretty advanced age,
" we will confine ourselves solely, to asking, very
" respectfully, of our illustrious author, whether
" Mademoiselle * * *, for instance, is much to be
" condemned for having preserved so well, and
" for so many years, the same air that she had in
" her youth, and for dressing herself accordingly?
" It is said, that she always has by her, at her
" toilette, the picture taken of her at twenty years
" of age, and that she never quits her glass till
" she has made heeself an exact resemblance of
" this picture. Thus much is certain, that if the
" illusion is not absolutely perfect to herself, it is
" quite so to those who only see her on the stage.
" When G * * appears, surrounded with a silvery
" or a rosy cloud, for it is not with a garment that
" he is covered, it it a light and brilliant vapour,
" in which the amorous breath of Zephyr has en-

" veloped him, does not Mademoiselle * * * ap-
" pear like Hebe herself? And for fifteen years
" past, has she not been always the same Hebe?
" As long as art can prolong the delicious mo-
" ments of youth, why refuse to bend to the sweet
" illusion. All that prudence can require upon
" this point, is to study the bounds of this magic
" power, and not vainly endeavour to pass them.
" Once more to our author."

I am now arrived at the most melancholy part of my task, and I tremble lest the freedom with which my opinion will be delivered, may give offence. Can I, however, refrain from speaking, and speaking without regard to the consequences that may ensue?—My subject draws me on, and does not permit me to dissemble in any thing. The question is, then, since it must be put in plain terms, of ugly women, a class, I am sorry to say, very numerous, and whom I am obliged to treat with a sort of rigour, to spare them, not only, the contempt of the public, but still worse, its indignation; nay, what will appear infinitely worse than all, ridicule without mercy.

Every ugly woman is prohibited quitting at any time the humble character of prose, and of the most simple prose; all the efforts she might make in other lines, could never go beyond the burlesque, or a parody extremely clumsy and extremely laughable. An ugly woman ought carefully to avoid whatever may attract the eyes of the company; they will be always out of humour with

her when attracted. If by means of dress she endeavour to force the world to endure her ugliness, let her expect that they will do themselves justice, and that, like a new Medusa, in making her serpents hiss in order so petrify those who look at her, she will find that some person will arise who will carry her head away.—Then what follows?

Ugly women, who may with greater propriety be considered as a third sex, than as a class of the fair, ought to make a solemn renunciation of all the cares which it is impossible for them to enjoy; they ought to turn their attention quite another way, and endeavour to become good country-gentlemen, amusing themselves with shooting and hunting, singing only rondeaus and drinking songs; if they could even obtain a seat in parliament, I do not, for my part, see any thing objectionable in it. I shall perhaps be asked, how a woman is to know that she is ugly, that she may take her measures accordingly? To this I answer, that she ought to consult her ears rather than her eyes; if the ears have not been accustomed to the language of admiration and gallantry, it is not austerity that has preserved them from so dangerous a snare.

There is still another order of women who, deserve the strongest censure, since their conduct is a perpetual insult upon common sense: they may be regarded as hardened criminals. These are women of sixty years old, and upwards, who having been handsome, or perhaps not handsome

in the last century, do not the more think it necessary to assume a grave mode of dress in this. They are seen in all public places making a display of every thing that dress and art can devise the most ingenious, for rendering themselves completely ridiculous. I have known some of these great-grandmothers dressed out in all the colours of the rainbow, looking like silk-worms, dying in the snares they make themselves. I have seen others displaying, with a still more insolent parade, those charms which no other hand but that of time, had invaded for forty years. The only care we can allow to this age, is to be extremely neat. If dress is not to be entirely renounced, let it be confined at least, to the taste of the elegy, the drama, or, at the utmost, the heroic; the latter however, ought to be reserved entirely for court mournings.

OBSERVATIONS *by the Translator.*

"If Lord Chesterfield had known Madame "Geoffrin, he would have cited her as a model "for the sort of dress proper for a fine old age. "Her dress is noble from its extreme simplicity; "pleasing, from every part corresponding per- "fectly with the other, and leaving no other ap- "pearance of study, but a scrupulous attention "to conceal from the eyes every thing with which "they might be wounded. This mode of dress, "which is perfectly becoming her age and situa- "tion, was adopted by her very early in life.

" *Women, in general,* the Duke de R*** used to " say, *dress like yesterday* ; *Madame Geoffrin alone* " *is always dressed like to-morrow.*"

An Oriental Fable.

The young Schah-Abbas loved his people, and was very fond of asking questions. One day, having met the philosopher Sadi, in a solitary walk in his gardens, " You know," said he, " the " two ministers who have governed the empire " since I have filled the throne of the world; " never were principles more opposite, never did " two people pursue a more different line of con- " duct, how is it that my people find equal reason " to complain of both?" " Sire," answered the sage, " one may do ill so well, and good so ill.— " There is but one way of being happy; there are " a hundred thousand ways of not being so.

SHAKESPEARE, *translated from the English, dedicated to the King, with this motto:* HOMO SUM, HUMANI NIHIL A ME ALIENUM PUTO. *Illustrated with engravings.*

This new Theatre, the subscription for which was set on foot the very beginning of last year, was expected with great impatience. The authors of so arduous an undertaking, are the Count de Catuélin, M. Letourneur, the translator of Young's Night Thoughts, and M. Fontaine-Malherbe. The two first volumes contain the numerous list of

subscribers, an epistle dedicatory to the King, written in a very indifferent taste, a little catalogue of the blunders made by M. Marmontel in speaking of the English Theatre, an account of the jubilee celebrated in honour of Shakespeare, the history of his life, with a long discourse extracted from the prefaces of the different editors of Shakespeare's works, a notice from messieurs the translators, and the plays of Othello the Moor of Venice, the Tempest, and Julius Cæsar.

The good and the ill said of a new book, prove equally the degree of sensation which it has excited; and that we have the honour of announcing to you, is an instance in point. We have not for a long time had any book published which has merited more criticism and more eulogium, on which people have disputed more eagerly, upon which, in short, the public opinion has been more divided and more uncertain. Persons bred up from their infancy in the utmost reverence and respect for our own great models, and who consequently render them that exclusive and superstitious worship, which differs in nothing from religious intolerance, consider the translators of Shakespeare, as a sort of sacrilegious beings, who would introduce monstrous and barbarous deities into the country. The devotees of Ferney cannot see without some ill-humour, a work which will shew all France, with what admirable address M. de Voltaire has appropriated to himself the beauties of Shakespeare, and the bad faith, less admirable,

with which he has afterwards permitted himself to translate him. Those who would preserve an air of impartiality, have given to the greatest genius that England ever produced, the justice due to him, but they have revenged themselves upon his translators. Those among the English, who are the most jealous of the glory of their theatre, complain that the work is translated too literally; others have found, that the translation, though very exact in some respects, is very defective in others; the greater number would have wished it to be at least more French. M. Marmontel has said of the latter, well enough, "*That their Shakespeare would resemble a savage decked out with some scraps of lace and embroidery, and a feather, but left otherwise in natural costume, without a head-dress, and without culottes.*" This translation has indeed, only pleased those very much, who did not know the poet, and had an eager desire to be acquainted with him; they have read him, nay devoured him, without concerning themselves whether it was the English or the French Shakespeare that they were reading. It is thus, for example, that M. Sedaine has read the work, and for some days he was in a state of intoxication with it, difficult to be described, but which may be tolerably well conceived by any one who is even but moderately acquainted with his work. "*Your transports,*" said I to him, "*are not at all surprising; it is the joy of a son who finds a father that he had never seen.*" This saying has

been repeated, with so many compliments, by the friends of M. Sedaine, that I may, I hope, be pardoned for having cited it here myself.

On Shakespeare.

It is not a question at this time of day, to examine whether or not Shakespeare really merits all the renown he has enjoyed for two centuries; and if the question were not already decided, it is not in France, and on the authority of a translation only, that it could be fairly judged. It is possible to see a great reputation usurped for some time, without any legitimate claim to it, but that which resists the efforts of time, which is strengthened and increased in proportion as the nation grows more cultivated and enlightened, must be founded upon titles that are incontestable. The Theatre of Shakespeare would not have continued, even to these days, the pride and admiration of its country, if it were not full of those sublime beauties which having their origin in nature itself, belong equally to all ages.

Neither would it be very consistent with justice here to enter upon an investigation of the preference which the English give to their theatre, over that of all others. This is a superiority which France, most undoubtedly, will never allow. But can she be a judge in her own cause? If the suit were carried to the tribunals of the different countries, in Europe, there is every reason to suppose that we should lose our cause in Ger-

many and Spain; we might, however, console ourselves with the hope that we should gain it in Italy, and still more in ancient Greece. But do not judgments so contradictory, announce the same spirit of partiality dictating the verdicts of each separate people?

If it were possible totally to throw off all spirit of party, all national prejudice, should we not say, that in order to decide whether Shakespeare or Corneille and Racine, are really most deserving of admiration, we must first determine the point whence these geniuses have started. Perhaps, after a profound investigation, it will be found that the distance there is between a certain degree of excellence, and the highest perfection the art can attain, is even more immense, more immeasurable, than the very sensible distance that appears between the birth of the art, and the first degrees of its progress. It would be necessary to examine, farther, the means and assistance each has found in the career it had to run; and perhaps, it will then appear, that those means and that assistance which seemed to favour genius, have in reality often repressed its efforts; that in saving it from some errors, they have deprived it of great part of its force and energy. The man of genius who speaks to a nation still barbarous, commands and disposes of, if I may be allowed the expression, all its tastes and affections: as soon as a people begin to be somewhat polished, their manners, their customs, their prejudices, are

so many ties which the man of genius is forced to respect, and which naturally render his march less free and less bold.

Would not the judge whose object was to compare with impartiality the theatres of the two nations, find, that if Shakespeare's plots are more vast and more varied, those of Corneille and Racine have a more noble simplicity, and are conducted in a more regular and connected manner? But would he not also acknowledge, that Shakespeare's, amid all their disorder, have a more theatrical effect, and take a powerful hold on the feelings? How can this be denied, when it is allowed by M. de Voltaire himself?—"There is," says he, "a great fund of interest in these wild and strange "pieces: I have seen the Julius Cæsar of Shakes-"peare performed, and I confess, that from the "first scene in which I heard the tribune reproach "the populace of Rome with their ingratitude "towards Pompey, and their attachment to "Cæsar, the conqueror of Pompey, I began to "be interested and affected. I did not afterwards "see any of the conspirators upon the stage, "without feeling my curiosity excited; and in spite "of all the ridiculous incongruities, I could not "help owning that the piece had taken fast hold "upon me." In another place, he says, "In no "other tragic author are there to be found so few "scenes of mere conversation, as in Shakespeare; "in almost every scene there is something new; "this is indeed at the expence of all rule and all

" propriety, but it must be acknowledged, that it " keeps up the attention."

In allowing that in the *tout-ensemble*, and in the detail, of Shakespeare's plays, there are more vigorous and more original strokes, we certainly cannot refuse to the chefs-d'œuvre of the French Theatre the merit of a more pure and more finished execution. If our poets may be reproached with having wandered too widely from truth and nature, in labouring to embellish their pieces, shall we not also reproach the English with having lost sight of them, in permitting so much exaggeration? if the style of our dramatic works be often cold and monotonous, is not that of the English Theatre often gigantic and bombast? Does it not often sin by a mixture of things which true taste would never dare to avow? It is undoubtedly ridiculous enough to make valets speak like heroes, but it is much more ridiculous to make heroes speak the language of the populace. There is a very decided shade between the tone which ought to be assumed by a king, and that which belongs to his confidante; but it is neither true nor natural that they should speak a language extremely different; those, in fact, who are immediately about their masters ought to speak in nearly the same style that they do. In all matters of art, there is no perfection without harmony. The more the figures and colours of a picture are varied, the more sublime will the picture be: but if these figures and

colours are not happily blended, if their diversity interrupts the general unison among all the parts, never can it be perfectly fine as a whole. The work may excite great interest, great emotions of admiration, but to the taste of true artists, there will always remain a vast deal more to be desired.

If I may be permitted to describe by a comparison the impression which Shakespeare, and that which Racine makes upon me, I should say, that I regard the one as a colossal statue, the idea of which is imposing and terrible;—but the execution sometimes rugged, sometimes negligent, and sometimes of the most highly finished kind, inspires me rather with astonishment than admiration. The other is a statue as regular in its proportions as the Apollo of Belvedere, the *tout-ensemble* of which is more celestial than nature itself; and notwithstanding some feeble and languid parts in the detail, charms me always by its dignity, its elegance, and the purity of its style.

The greatest evil that the translation of Shakspeare can produce in France, would be the turning away our young men from the study of the only models which can be imitated without danger. This would be inviting them vainly to make experiments in a species of writing, which can never accord with our manners, or with the general spirit of the country. It is without doubt much more easy to violate all the rules of art, than to adhere to any one of them. It is not difficult to heap a crowd of events one upon the other, to

mix the grotesque and the terrible, to pass from a public-house to a field of battle, and from a cemetery to a throne. There is much less difficulty in giving nature such as it presents itself to the eye than in selecting with that judicious discrimination which requires the selector to have the most accurate and refined taste. It is, in short, a far more easy task to exaggerate nature than to embellish her; and if the faults which disfigure even the finest productions of Shakespeare be easily discerned, it would be no less easy to imitate them. But is it in the power of any other than this all-creative genius to be sublime, even in setting himself above all rules, and to render, by the wonderful comprehensiveness of his imagination, all the improbabilities and monstruosities of his pieces supportable. Who but himself could hope to maintain, in the most extensive and complicated plots, that wonderful clearness observable in their progress, and which sheds such a light, as it were, of itself over every part of the subject? Who could ever flatter themselves with upholding that great fund of interest, which he seems himself to interrupt at his pleasure; but which he is always sure to resume with undiminished energy? What genius ever penetrated more deeply into the inmost recesses of the human heart, into all the characters and passions of human nature? It is evident, from his works themselves, that he was very imperfectly acquainted with the great writers of antiquity; if he had been more acquainted with those

illustrious models, his pieces would no doubt have gained very much on the side of order and regularity. But, even if he had studied the ancients with as much assiduity as they have been studied by our great masters, if he had lived in habits of familiarity with the heroes he has undertaken to paint, could he have given their characters with more truth and accuracy? His Julius Cæsar is as full of Plutarch as Britannicus is of Tacitus; and if Shakespeare was not better acquainted with history than most people, he has, at least as far as relates to characters, guessed it, better than it is known by others.

It will always be dangerous to attempt transferring, into another language and among another people, the beauties that characterize the theatre of any nation whatever; but the enterprise will be the more or less arduous according to the closer or more distant relations that subsist between the two countries. Of this kind of relation, I see very little between the French and English, especially between the French of the times of Corneille and Racine, and the English of the days of Shakespeare. I do not know whether things be much changed since our horse-races on the plains of Neuilly, but I know well that the object of the English Stage has always appeared to me hitherto to differ *in toto* from that which ours has in view. The whole endeavour of the one seems to be to excite the most ardent sensations; all the efforts of the other seem directed to recalling them

with mildness, and giving them their natural bias. One seems only occupied with endeavouring to give a high degree of excitement to the character and manners of the nation: the other with endeavouring to soften them. The one supposes a sort of *vis inertiæ* in the imagination, which requires to be roused by violent and extraordinary shocks; the other seems to presume a great facility, of receiving all kinds of external impressions, souls naturally sympathetic, and consequently very much disposed to imitate whatever strikes their feelings warmly. If these differences are really as great as they appear to be, how is it possible that the theatre of the one nation can ever suit the other? —I will say more; might not the same pictures that the one may see with perfect safety, however terrible and frightful the truth may be, if exhibited to the other, endanger the producing very ill effects, not merely attended with inconveniences and objections, but wholly adverse to the moral end proposed by the scene.

The observations we have here ventured to make, are not however offered with a view to throwing any obstacles in the way of our feeling what resources a true dramatic genius might draw from the English theatre to enrich our own. M. de Voltaire has given an example of this, and there is not one of his examples which may not be considered as a model. It is impossible not to see that some of the greatest beauties in his *Death of Cæsar* are borrowed from Shakespeare; neither

can it be doubted that the germ of the character of *Orasmin* is to be found in that of *Othello*.

If this article did not already exceed the bounds we have prescribed to ourselves, we might here quote several passages from *Zaïre*, which appear clearly imitated from the English poet. And why should M. de Voltaire not permit himself the same licence that Corneille and Racine have ventured to take?—If he have since said so much against the work, of which he availed himself so well, it was without doubt to prevent others doing what they would not have done with the same dexterity as himself; and in this perhaps he judged extremely right.

M. Rigouley de Juvigny, and M. Imbert have written pamphlets and even volumes to prove that Piron was one of the greatest men France ever produced; and M. de La Harpe has written several pages to shew us that these pretensions are very little exaggerated;—but M. de La Harpe had his reasons for this. No one of these gentlemen however has attempted to account for the immense difference there is between the *Metromania* and all the other works of Piron, though this extraordinary disparity is a subject well worthy the attention of the curious. An anecdote, which we have recently heard, will contribute towards throwing some light upon the matter. Some persons, who, from their situations, are very much in the way of knowing the secret histories of the theatres,

have assured me that the Metromania was, in the original, very different from what it is at present, and that when it was refused by the players, its rejection was highly merited. Yet however defective the piece then was, Mademoiselle Quinault and her brother, who had both a great deal of taste and discernment, perceived in it the germs of a very excellent piece, and accordingly engaged the poet to correct, nay, almost to re-write it; one scene was altered at least twenty-times over. Mademoiselle Quinault had acquired a great ascendancy over Piron; and, by a little management, she allured him into making all the sacrifices requisite for bringing the work to perfection. Although anecdotes of this kind are always questionable, yet the truth of this is strongly supported by many corroborating circumstances. It is so much the more probable, since what constitutes the very essential difference to be found between this and Piron's other works is, that all the others are so remarkably deficient on the score of taste and propriety; and these are the very defects which would be most probably corrected by the advice of a friend endowed with taste and judgment.

May, 1776.

Although the times are much changed, although the present state of manners, and the present political ideas have very sensibly diminished the influence of the most illustrious families, and the honours paid to them, yet the spirit of the

French Nobles is not in the smallest degree abated! What the Duchess de Fleury said some months ago, in a numerous assembly, savours very much of the loftiness of ancient times. She was talking with much warmth of the manner in which M. Turgot had attacked some of the most essential rights of the Nobles. Madame de Laval maintained, that they had no reason to complain of a thing which the King only required, after having set the example himself;—he, from whom alone, the Nobles derived all their lustre, nay, their very existence. "You astonish me," answered the young Duchess. "Whatever respect I have for "the King, I never considered myself as indebted "to him for what I am. I know that the Nobles "have often made sovereigns, but although you "have talents as distinguished as your birth, I "defy you to point me out the King who ever "made Nobles."

Since the death of Mademoiselle de L'Espinasse is considered as an event of moment in the literary world, although she has left no work as a monument of her literary talents, at least none that is known, it would be a great omission to let it pass unnoticed in these Memoirs. Destitute of fortune, without birth, and without beauty, she had yet drawn around her a numerous society of persons of various descriptions, all assiduous in their attentions to her. She was always at home for the reception of her friends, from five in the

afternoon till nine. Here a number of chosen persons of various descriptions were sure to assemble, men of all ranks in the State, the Church, and the Court, foreigners, military officers, and above all, the most distinguished among the literati. It is agreed on all hands, that if the name of M. D'Alembert, with whom she lived, first attracted them to the house, she was the magnet that retained them. Devoted entirely to keeping up this society, of which she was the soul and the charm, all her particular tastes and connections were made subservient to it. She scarcely ever went to the theatre, or into the country, and if, by an extraordinary chance she was not to be at home in the evening, it was made known beforehand to all Paris. Her enemies reproached her very absurdly, with meddling in a thousand things with which she had no concern, and especially with having promoted by her intrigues, that philosophical despotism which M. D'Alembert was accused, by the cabal of the devout, of exercising over the French Academy. But why should not women who rule almost every thing in France, exercise their authority also in deciding upon literary honours? Is it more difficult to make an Academician than a minister, or the general of an army?—And why refuse our admiration to an unprotected woman, who owed her power and distinction entirely to her talents, and the resources of her own mind.

M. Dorat, who conceived that he had ground of complaint against her, formed the plan of re-

venging himself in a piece which he entitled, *The Trumpeters.** This comedy, had it ever been acted, would probably have made no less noise than that of *The Philosophers*, but it has hitherto slept quietly in the author's port-folio. He has, however, read it to many people, and it is agreed to be written with more liveliness and interest than most of M. Dorat's comedies. The hero is a young man who is to be initiated into the mysteries of the modern philosophy, and who is accordingly instructed in the means by which he may the most readily attain to great celebrity. M. d'Alembert and Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse are of course prominent features in the piece. One of their most zealous admirers is an old courtier, who is very hard of hearing, before whom the plan of a new tragedy is read, and seeing all the rest of the company in extasies, he cries louder than any of them:—*Ah! this is indeed real comedy!* As M. Dorat did not bring out his piece while Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse was alive, it is to be presumed, that it will not be produced at all, that he will generously make this sacrifice to her memory; at least, it will hardly be brought out while he continues to aspire to the honour of a seat in the Academy.

All the reports which have been circulated by envy, and malignity against Mademoiselle de l'Es-

* Not the players upon the *trumpet*, but the *Trumpeters* of each other's fame.

pinasse, have not destroyed the reputation she always enjoyed for superior talents and wit. Never was any one more calculated to shine in company; she possessed in the most eminent degree that art so precious and so difficult to be acquired, of bringing forth the talents of others, and leading them to contribute their share towards the general conviviality, without the least effort on her part being apparent. She had uncommon address in making persons of very different and even very opposite turns, amalgamate and draw together in company, with as much appearance of unison and harmony, as if they had no sentiments, no ideas, but what were common to both. If conversation began to flag, by a single word thrown in with judgment, she would reanimate it in an instant; or if it had run too long in one direction, so that the subject began to be worn threadbare, with a word she turned it, and it became more brilliant than ever. No subject appeared foreign to her, there was none with which she did not seem pleased, and that she could not render agreeable to others. Politics, religion, philosophy, news, stories, nothing was excluded from her *conversazioni*, and thanks to her talents, the most trifling anecdote found in a perfectly natural manner, the exact place and attention it deserved. Novelties of every kind were collected at her house, even at their very first appearance, and though general conversation never languished, every person who wished to entertain each other apart from the rest

was at full liberty to do so. The genius of Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse was, in short, present to every thing, and it might well be said, that the charm of some invisible power was constantly attracting all particular interests towards the common centre.

In order to carry the art of conversation to such a point, it is doubtless not sufficient to be born with great talents and readiness of mind, and with a considerable pliancy of character, a person must by an early intercourse with the world, have been thrown into such a situation as would call forth and form those talents. This was the case with Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse. In the house of the Marchioness du Deffand, whose companion she was for several years, she had every opportunity possible of improving her talents, and perhaps she would never have had the misfortune of quarrelling with her patroness if she had not succeeded in improving them, but too well. What however renders it probable that if jealousy, on the part of Madame du Deffand, had any share in the quarrel, there were other reasons combined with it is, that Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse is much more regretted by her acquaintance than her friends. Can it be possible for any one at the same time to possess the highest talents and the highest virtues.

The name that this lady had taken is one by which she was always well known in France, though it is not her own. She was the natural daughter of Madame d'Albon who never dared to acknow-

ledge her, and from whom she never would consent to receive any favour after she was arrived at an age to be sensible of the value of that which was refused her. The lessons of M. d'Alembert, the example even of his courage, could never console her for the misfortune of her birth;—She was born with uncommon sensibility of nerves. Although her countenance never appeared young, and although she was past the age of love, it is generally believed that she has fallen the victim to a hopeless passion; this was said to be the fifth or sixth affair of the kind in which she was involved during the course of her life. Judge then if there be more security against this passion in philosophy, and among philosophers, than amid the walks of beauty and the great frequenters of them.

Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse's Will appears somewhat extraordinary. She has left her furniture to M. d'Alembert, locks of her hair to all her intimate friends, and the payment of her debts to the Archbishop of Toulouse. Since her death, and only since that time, it has become known that Madame Geoffrin made her an allowance of a thousand crowns a year; this was her sole means of subsistence.

In the speech lately delivered by M. de La Harpe upon his admission at the French Academy, he gives a definition of a man of letters, which I cannot forbear citing as perhaps scarcely inferior to some of the finest passages that grace the eulogiums

of Fenelon or of Racine. It forms as it were, the exordium of the speech.

" What then, Gentlemen," says he, " is a man " of Letters ?—He is one whose principal profes- " sion is to cultivate his own reason that he may " improve that of others. It is in this species of " ambition, which is peculiar to himself, that he " concentrates all the activity, all the interest " divided by other men among the various ob- " jects that alternately engage their attention and " fix their minds. Eager to extend and multiply " his ideas he remounts into past ages and makes " his way among the scattered monuments of anti- " quity, to collect, amid traces often nearly effaced, " the soul and the thoughts of the great men of all " ages. He converses with them in their respective " languages, which he afterwards employs to embel- " lish his own ; he traverses the domains of foreign " literature, the honourable spoils of which he " brings back to enrich the treasury of his own " country. Blessed with those happy organs " which inspire him with a passion for the fine and " the true in every way, he leaves to narrow and " prejudiced minds those vain efforts which would " bend all talents and all characters to the same " level. He enjoys the fruitful and sublime varieties " of nature in the different means she has betowed " upon her favourites to charm, to enlighten, and " to serve mankind. It is to him especially that " nothing good or laudable is ever lost ; it is for an

" ear like his that Virgil has constructed his verses
" with such a charm, with so much harmony; it is
" for a judge blessed with so much sensibility that
" Racine has illumined with so mild a light, the
" inward recesses of the tender heart; that Tacitus
" has exhibited by means of lights so terrific, the
" profound depths of the tyrant's soul; it is to him
" that Montesquieu addressed himself, when he
" pleaded for humanity, and Fenelon, when he
" embellished virtue so highly. To him every
" truth he acquires is a real conquest; every chef-
" d'œuvre a true source of happiness."

M. de La Harpe succeeded to a chair in the Academy by the premature death of M. Colardeau. This latter had been elected an academician but did not live to take his seat. It fell to the lot of M. Marmontel to reply to the speech of M. de La Harpe, mentioned in the preceding article; in this reply he adverted to the death and character of M. Colardeau, in the following terms:

" That a young man on whom heaven had
" bestowed no other blessing but talents—what do
" I say? to whom heaven had sold so dear the
" rare talents of the mind, with which he was en-
" dowed; those superior faculties of the soul; that
" delicate organisation, an organisatio to which,
" perhaps, he was indebted alike for the brilliant
" vivacity of his imagination, for the exquisite re-
" finement of his taste, and for that sensibility
" which spread such a charm over his writings;—

" that this young man, to whom letters supplied " the place of every other good, even of health; " who, like Orpheus, found them even suspend " his pains; who had no other consolation in his " afflictions, no other hope, no other ambition, as " you know, Gentlemen, but to secure the voice of " posterity by securing your's; who solicited as " the recompense of his many nights of painful " watching, the honour of a seat among you; " who turned his dying eyes towards that place " which waited to receive him, and of which you " had judged him worthy;—that this unfortunate " young man should expire, upon the very thres- " hold of the sanctuary, stretching out his arms " towards you, without being permitted by remorse- " less death to enter; this is a misfortune the more " cruel, inasmuch as it has been hitherto without " example.

" His amenity, his candour, that amiable " weakness shall I call it, that defect so interesting " when it does not go the length of becoming a " vice, when it only proceeds from the delicacy of " a tender heart, simple and docile to the move- " ments of goodness; his character, in short, at- " tracted every one towards him. The art of imi- " tating was his to a peculiar degree. Neither the " monotonous sadness of the gloomy sketches of " Young, nor the pure and brilliant colouring of " the prose of Montesquieu, nor the charm which " the verses of Quinault had substituted to the " illusions of those of Tasso in the Opera of

" Armida, nothing intimidated him. He had stu-
" died so profoundly, and with such assiduity the
" resources of our language, and the means of
" giving it more pliancy and grace in its varied
" movements, that the difficulties to be conquered
" were to him a new advantage, and what would
" have driven another to despair, only presented
" him with a fresh stimulus to exertion. Nothing
" was more worthy of his talents than the poem of
" *Jerusalem Delivered*, which he had conceived the
" design of translating into verse. He had already
" sketched the first books, when he learnt that one
" of us, M. Watelet, was occupied upon the very
" same thing. From that time he renounced it.
" The person to whom he shewed this piece of
" respect, would fain have declined it, but M. Co-
" lardeau, more anxious to establish his character
"for urbanity, than for poetry, came off the victor
" in the contest of generosity. On his death-bed
" he recollected that he had not destroyed his trans-
" lation of Tasso, and he feared that his friends, in
" their eagerness to collect all the fruits of his la-
" bours, might be tempted not to execute the sen-
" tence he had passed upon it. He, who of all
" men living, resigned himself with the most en-
" tire confidence to his friends, for the first time
" dared not trust them. He felt that to destroy
" any of his writings might be an effort beyond
" their courage, that it was a task reserved to him-
" self alone. Dying as he was, he rose from his
" bed, and, as if re-animated, when the question

" was to perform an act of conscience, seizing the " paper with his almost powerless hands, com- " pleted his sacrifice. The genius of M. Colardeau " was the friend of tranquillity, he delighted in " solitude, but it was a mild and pleasing melan- " choly that he loved. The songs of the birds " were to him the most delightful of all melody, " he would pass whole hours in listening to them. " *Listen*, said he, one day to a friend who was " with him, *listen, how sweet is the voice of the* " *nightingale, how melodious are her accents!* " *such ought to be my verses.* The songster of " the spring was the only rival of whom he per- " mitted himself to entertain any envy: *Criticism*, " said he, *makes me so miserable, that I never* " *could have the heart to exercise it towards any* " *body.*"

Letter from Madame d'Epinay to the Abbé Galiani.

June 29, 1776.

Certainly, my dear and charming Abbé, our correspondence is of a very singular nature. We exchange every week letters of three or four pages in which there is nothing but *I am well, I am ill, I am gay, I am sad, it is hot, it is cold, such an one is gone, such an one is come*, and the like. We are, however, as well satisfied with ourselves as if we were princes, and give ourselves credit for all possible liveliness and wit. If by chance a letter does not arrive duly, there are such complaints,

such outcries, it seems as if some dreadful disaster had happened. Do you know that I begin to think we are much happier than we suppose ourselves? Since you are solicitous about my health know that it is in the best state possible, that it is travelling very fast towards the *robust*; to give you a proof of it, I can add that I begin to resume, not indeed my labours, but the habit of *thinking*, and if this state should continue, I do not despair of being able to proceed in my *Dialogues on Education*. I must impart to you some ideas, which, in my *thinking* moments, have come into my head. I have asked myself why all the animals, who certainly have hitherto remained our most humble servants, think proper to be born with the perfectibility belonging to them, while the human race labour from the moment of their birth, quite to their death, without ever obtaining that of which they are capable; and this speculation was followed by proposing to myself the question, whether the advantage was on our side or theirs? Before I tell you my answer, I must inform you that having proposed my two questions to a man of great address and intelligence, to a *savant*, in short, instead of solving the problem, he said: *Read a book which Bordeu has just published.*

'*Read*! *I read*! I exclaimed. *Never. Facts as many as you please, but as to reasonings I never read farther than my own head. All that I know has been the result of my own reflections, and what I do not know I must find out.* In truth, my good

Abbé there are moments when I am vain enough, mad enough, to think that I have found out the world. I have not, however, been able of myself alone to invent a satisfactory answer to my first question. I have said, is it that every species of animals is occupied only with what belongs to itself?—but that did not satisfy me. I mentioned it to the philosopher (to whom, by way of parenthesis, you owe an answer) when he said: *This subject has more than once occupied my mind. It seems to be that each species of animals has some predominant organ by which alone it is directed, and that man has all that belong to him in a degree and combined together, the head and thought being the centre of all.* As to the other question, which side has the advantage, I do not hesitate to decide for the animals; they have neither the fear of death, nor the love of riches; for riches, indeed, they have no occasion.

Why is not man born, like other animals, as perfect as he is ever intended to be?

This problem is so little a speculation of mere curiosity, that on the solution of it, depends some of the most important points in physics and in morals. Whatever desire Jean-Jacques may have had to bring mankind back to the charming state of quadrupeds, he has been forced to agree that the faculty of constantly advancing in his attainments, establishes a very great and specific

difference between man and all other animals. It is in this faculty that he finds the fatal source of all our errors, of all our troubles, of all our depravity. The most sublime *thinker* of the last age, Pascal, has founded his system entirely upon this distinctive quality of man. "We are born," says he; "in misery and weakness, this is the proof of original sin; we are born with the desire and the means of improving ourselves, this is a proof of the happiness to which we were destined, and which we are to find in another life."

Before we seek to resolve the question, let us first endeavour to define it clearly. Is it absolutely true that animals are born with all the faculties they are capable of possessing? Is it not evident, in the first place, that those are to be excepted who have been ill-advised enough to associate themselves with us. Do not those on whom we are constantly making war, acquire a degree of foresight which they would otherwise never have attained? Do not those who have occasion for address or artifice to procure their subsistence, or insure their safety, become, through experience, more cunning and more adroit. In short, if things are well examined, will it not be found that it is the same with regard to this perfectibility, as with all the faculties we enjoy; we only differ from other animals in the more or less, in the less or more. Who can assure us that the ants, the bees, the beavers, have always lived in societies, as we see them live at present.

It is evident that man is infinitely superior to

all other animals, both by the general system of his organization, and by the happy use that experience and society have taught him to make of his powers. What then decides the degree that he is to attain in his progress towards that perfection which seems exclusively to belong to him, at least under two striking relations? It is that, in the first place, the termination of this progress is at once vague and distant; and in the second, that its advance is slow, in some cases almost imperceptible! Will not the extreme difference to be remarked between the growth of man and that of other animals be sufficient of itself to explain the enigma. Of all organized beings man is, beyond dispute, the creature whose powers grow and unfold themselves at the slowest rate. Half the time destined for the bounded circle of his existence is passed in being born, and the other half in dying. The degree of excellence he may hope to attain, though it cannot be determined with absolute precision, is decided to a certain point, for the species, as well as the individual, and arrived at this degree we have always seen him either forced to stop or condemned to retrograde. What are we to conclude from this?—That man is of all organised combinations the most ingenious, the most complicated, the most perfect, but, at the same time, the slowest in its formation, the most subtile, and the most frail. The great suppleness which preserves his fibres during so long an infancy, the gradual, but slow and almost imperceptible progress of his growth, render him un-

doubtedly more proper than any other animal to receive the different forms and modifications of which his nature is susceptible; they render him consequently more proper than any other to participate in the advantages and inconveniences of education and society.

I think, as the Abbé Galiani has said, that animals have for the most part some predominant organ by which they are governed, and which exclusively determines the nature and degree of their instinct. I do not, however, believe this rule to be without exception, and I do not know whether the majority of mankind would not, in this respect, resemble the animals, if they were to remain insulated in the forests. It is very certain that, even denaturized as we are at present by our social institutions, we not unfrequently meet with men who appear led on entirely by some invincible ascendant, which impels them to apply to some particular thing, so that they are wholly incapable of applying to any other. It is a wager of a hundred thousand to one, that if La Fontaine had not written fables, and Gessner idylls, neither the one nor the other would ever have done any thing.

Be this as it may, it cannot be denied that the ideal perfection of man consists only in the more exact proportion of all his powers in the more constant and more varied use of all the faculties he has received from nature, or been able to acquire by genius and labour. Such is at least man in society, such is the citizen of Plato. Whoever, in

order to devote himself to one single object, neglects all others, is a sort of monster in morals, and may become a being very pernicious to society; it is not therefore, astonishing that the first of all legislators banished artists and poets from his republic.

It must be owned, that men who have only applied themselves all their lives to being beaux esprits, or who have devoted themselves to any particular art, are rarely good for any thing else. Madame de Tencin, in calling the literati who formed her circle her animals, made use of an expression much more natural, much more philosophic, than people in general might be tempted to allow, particularly when it is recollected, that among these animals were included Fontenelle, Fenelon, and Mairan.

This brings to my mind an anecdote of M. de Montesquieu, which could never have been expected of his philosophy, and which his good friend, the Abbé Quesnel, has often related to me. The latter was requested by him, when he went to his seat in the country, to watch over the education of his son, whom he had just placed at the college of Harcourt; at his return to Paris, his first anxiety was of course to see the Abbé, and learn of him how the young man was going on. He asked him first concerning his manners?—They leave nothing to be desired.—His character?—Mild and engaging; he is beloved by all his companions.—Thus far the Baron's paternal affection was highly

gratified, when the Abbé, desirous of gratifying it still farther, said that his masters were exceedingly pleased with his application, that he shewed a great taste for science, particularly for natural history, in which he had made a very great progress for a youth of his age. M. de Montesquieu, at hearing this turned pale, and threw himself into a chair with all the tokens of the deepest despair. "Ah! my friend," he exclaimed, "you martyrise "me—all my hopes, then, are at an end. You "know the plans that I had formed for this child, "the post to which I had destined him; but 'tis "over; he will never be any thing but a man of "letters, an original, like myself—we shall never "be able to make any thing else of him." A part of the prediction was accomplished, the young Baron de Montesquieu lives in obscurity in the country, occupied with butterflies and other insects, and with masses; for, with his taste for natural history, he unites a devotion extremely precise, and carried somewhat to extravagance.

It would be undoubtedly time to return to our subject, but after the digression we have made, it is better to wait for the Abbé Galiani's answer.

The true cause of Racine's disgrace at court is but little known. It arose from the following circumstance. This poet was often invited to the private suppers of Louis the Fourteenth with Madame de Maintenon. At one of them, the conversation turned upon Molière's comedies, when it was ob-

served by some one present, that his first pieces were full of scenes very indelicate and offensive to good manners. Courtier as he was, Racine was, perhaps, for the first time in his life, led astray by a fit of absence, for he said with some eagerness, *'Tis very true, that miserable animal, that hackney coachman, Scarron, had spoiled him entirely.* This imprudent remark made an impression upon Madame de Maintenon, which she could never forgive, and which rendered him much more odious in her eyes than his Jansenism, or his Memoirs. This anecdote I received from Madame du Deffand, who had it from the best authority.

For some years we have seen the most perfect union, the most affecting harmony subsist between France and England. Never could two neighbouring and rival nations have established a more delightful intercourse of trade in fashions and follies. If our swords, our gardens, our carriages, must all be English, Great Britain has been not less wild after our feathers, our flowers, our trinkets, and ornaments of every kind. These sapient islanders admire our cooks no less than we admire their philosophers; they translate our dramas and pamphlets, as we translate their novels and voyages. If their young lords come and ruin themselves in France, for the sake of our princesses at the opera, our young dukes, in their turn, ruin themselves in England with the horse-races. It is thus that ancient enmities are forgotten; it is thus

that by degrees those barbarous prejudices, which prevent nations reciprocally civilizing and instructing each other, disappear

We see with much grief of heart, that a harmony so desirable and so precious, is in great danger of being interrupted, and that by a circumstance which, at the first glance, seemed rather calculated to draw the union still closer. It is this unfortunate translation of Shakespeare which is likely to raise the storm. M. de Voltaire, although he had undoubtedly more reason than any one to rejoice in the new honours paid to this great man, could not learn without indignation that the French had had the meanness to sacrifice to a foreign idol the immortal crowns of Corneille and Racine. His patriotic resentment had already broke out with some warmth in the letter to M. d'Argental, which I had the honour of sending you last month. But in a matter of this importance, he thought it not advisable to trust solely to the zeal, somewhat too pacific, of his *decr angel*, and he has just made an appeal to the authority of the French Academy itself. Ought not this measure to be regarded as a formal declaration of war? It is difficult to foresee what will be the consequences, but they may be exceedingly important. The idolatrous worship paid to Shakespeare by the whole English nation is well known: will they permit the French Academy quietly to discuss the title he has to this idolatry? will they acknowledge the competence of this foreign jurisdiction? will they not seek to form

a party even in the bosom of our literature? Can it be forgotten how many quarrels of this kind, and upon subjects less interesting, have produced hatred, fury, sects. The minds of men are already in a great fermentation. On the one side they are going to translate *Mrs. Montague's Apology for Shakespeare* into French; on the other, M. de La Harpe, always inspired with the same zeal, is occupied upon a critical examination of *Othello*, not only of the conduct of the piece, but of the style both of the original and the translation, though he does not understand a word of English. What does that signify?—When, about fifty or sixty years ago, a dispute arose about Homer, were those who took the side against the Greek poet any better acquainted with the language in which he wrote?—Not a bit—genius supplies every thing.

LETTER *upon Jean Jacques Rousseau, addressed to a German Princess.*

The name of Rousseau is celebrated all over Europe, but his life at Paris is obscure; one scarcely knows that he is there. He wished to fly mankind, and mankind have forgotten him; nobody ever made a greater mistake than he has done, for he only avoided his species, with a view to being the more eagarly sought by them. Rousseau little knew the public of Paris: here, in order to attract curiosity, that curiosity must be incessantly awakened; either the person himself, or his works, must be constantly before the public; above

all, before those among the public who are the trumpeters to the rest, I mean the men of letters and the great. Whoever is desirous of seeing the public attention turned towards him, must be always in action, always presenting himself before them in all possible forms. This is the principle which calls forth M. de Voltaire's activity—the secret of his ambition. At the distance of a hundred leagues from the capital, he only exists for her, and in her. Every week he sends some little pamphlet to Paris by the post, and expects the news of its fate the week following. Sixty years of glory do not satisfy him sufficiently to permit of his allowing himself any repose. It is not enough for him to have been the hero of the age, he would also be the novelty of the day; because he is well aware that the novelty of the day often eclipses the hero of the age: he knows, that to the idle, restless, and disdainful crowd that fill this vast city, composed of writers and readers, the present is every thing, the past is nothing. Judge whether Rousseau, who has vegetated in silence and in a retreat for ten years, can attract attention upon the tumultuous stage of our literature, where new scenes and new actors are introduced at every moment. On arriving at Paris, he shewed himself several times at a coffee-house, and the people crowded to see him: he might at present walk in the Tuileries, or upon the boulevards, at the time of the high mall, and not a soul would know that he was there. You were led into an error, when you were informed

that he was made librarian at Choisy; he was never thought of for the place.

You will perhaps ask whether this indifference to his person has extended itself to his works? No; they are always read with pleasure, and I believe always will be so. The enthusiasm which they excited at first has given place to the tranquil judgment of enlightened men; they see where he is defective, but they will always feel his beauties. Neither the profound reasoning of Montesquieu, nor the charming vivacity of Montaigne, are to be found in his works, though he often endeavours to imitate the latter; nor can they boast the brilliant and rapid style of Voltaire, with his purity of taste: Indeed, the two ought never to have been put into comparison. He has often, however, a natural and interesting warmth in his writings, with an energy of feeling and expression that belongs to himself alone. He is very unequal, and frequently diffuse, but in general the fluency of his style nourishes, if I may say so, the heart and mind, without fatiguing them. He often sports with truth and with the reader, and his system and plans, taken in a general point of view, scarcely ever deserve any other appellation than brilliant errors; but he always brings forward, at the end of a false principle, a number of important truths, which ensure his pardon. In reading his works, we must think very little of the main question, and seize all the accessary beauties that present themselves; this is to read as he wrote. Although the

tendency of his works has been much condemned, it is certain that his morality is very fine, very affecting, and that it inspires the inmost recesses of the heart with a sentiment of, and respect for, virtue. Lively imaginations always feel with ardour the subject they treat, and employ, in painting the good and the beautiful, the same energy which leads them sometimes in practice to deviate from their principles.

If we consider every one of his writings separately, it will be found that the work which first established his reputation, is that which least deserved fame. His *Speech*, crowned at Dijon, is nothing but an elegant declamation upon a subject, which in itself was a mere sophism. It is not to be made a question, whether literature and science corrupt the morals; the idea is revolting to common sense. It is ridiculous to imagine that the heart is corrupted, by endeavouring to cultivate the reason. Man is not corrupted because he is enlightened; but when he is corrupted, the light he has acquired, which ought to increase his virtue, may be perverted into the means of adding to his vices; as there are certain nourishing kinds of food, which give additional vigour to the healthy man, but which kill those already sick. It was necessary to prove that corruption has always come in the train of power and learning, because it is in the nature of man, and, above all, of social man, to employ force in every sense. Prosperity and power must have multiplied at once the means of knowledge

and of corruption, as the heat which makes the sap circulate, forms at the same time the vapours that produce storms. The subject thus considered might have been very philosophical, but the author of the *Speech* only endeavoured to be singular. It was the advice given him by Diderot. *Which side of the subject do you mean to take?* said he to the Genevese, when he was to compose his speech on this question for the Academy at Dijon. *In favour of letters,* answered Jean Jaques. *'Tis the asses' bridge,* replied Diderot: *take the other side, and you will see what a noise your speech will make.*

Diderot was right, the *Speech* did make a great noise. The thesis had so much the more applause, as it was at first very ill controverted. The Genevese conquered with the weapon of ridicule an adversary who defended the right side very clumsily. The discussion, besides, produced a greater effect than the speech; Rousseau had got into his element, which is disputing. An antagonist at last started, M. Borde of Lyons, who wrote with great spirit and eloquence, but by that time the contest began to be worn out, the public paid little attention to the new champion, and Rousseau answered no more.

Such, however, was the effect produced by the dispute upon the mind of Rousseau, that the opinion he had defended, which was not originally his own, and which he had ostensibly embraced, for the sake of appearing singular, from having been supported, was at length adopted by him:

After having begun by writing against letters, he grew out of humour with those that cultivated them. He had already a certain taint of sourness and jealousy with regard to literary men. This first success, greater than he had any reason to expect, made him feel his own strength; and those faculties, which had been smothered by twenty years of obscurity and misery, now began to burst out. These twenty years, passed as a sort of non-entity, tormented his pride in the height of his present enjoyment. He remembered, that having been clerk to M. Dupin, he was not permitted to dine at his table on the days when the literati assembled there, and he entered the field of literature, as Marius re-entered Rome, breathing vengeance, and remembering the marshes of Minturnæ.

This disposition gave occasion to the *Discourse upon Inequality*, stronger with regard to matter and style than his speech at Dijon, but equally paradoxical, equally inspired by a hatred of learning, and tending to prove, that every man who thinks is a depraved animal. Such absurdities can never please any persons with right minds; but his vein of satire always amuses and fastens itself upon the reader: it is the conversation of a savage, who amuses polished men by the odd phrases with which he abuses them.

His propensity to satire found a fine field on which to indulge itself, in the quarrel of the buffoons, which produced the *Letter upon Music*.

This work, replete with good principles, has no other fault than pushing them too far. Rousseau, indeed, often brings to the mind what Tacitus says, that it is a very rare talent to set bounds to truth and wisdom, *tenere sapientiâ modum.* It states very clearly the defects of our music, but it adds that we cannot have any. At the same time he composed the *Devin du Village*, the music of which is full of grace, and perfectly melodious. Since that time, the compositions of Duni, of Philidor, of Montigny, and, above all, the enchanting music of Gretty—music which has been performed all over Europe, where before nothing was known of French music but the airs that accompanied their dances—the performances of these composers have, it must be allowed, fully refuted Rousseau. It is very probable, however, that his opinion remains unchanged.

After having proscribed the opera, he next attacked the French theatre, and laboured to prove that if the one was only calculated to inspire *ennui*, the other was no less calculated to corrupt our morals. Two very distinguished writers undertook the defence of the stage, D'Alembert and Marmontel; their apologies are good, but one would rather be in the wrong, after the manner of Rousseau.

At length, after so many different excursions, he entered upon a new career, and combined his philosophy, his quarrels, and his loves, in a sort of

work which is, of all others, the most sure to find readers, in a novel. The *Nouvelle Héloise* appeared; and was read, or rather devoured, with an incredible avidity; the female part of the community passed whole nights, which they thought could never be better employed, in reading it, and were dissolved in tears. It is there that he has ventured upon what would not have entered into the imagination of any other novel-writer, to make two lovers happy before the end of the first volume, when three other volumes remained; any one, but himself, would never have known what to do with those three. It is very certain that the work, notwithstanding its occasional tediousness, notwithstand the frequent declamations, the improbabilities, the excrescences, draws the reader on to the end? but it is also impossible not to acknowledge, that upon a second reading, nothing remains of this undigested mass, except a few passages of a very superior nature, full of passion and philosophy. The rest can only please young heads and women, to whom every thing is good when the question is of love. It cannot be denied that the action languishes from the beginning of the second volume; that many of the letters are very moderate, and written in a very bad taste; that the marriage of the heroine is revolting; that the character of Edward is a caricature, and his amours in Italy an enigma; that Clara is a feeble imitation of Miss Howe; that the invectives against the French opera are carried to a height perfectly ridiculous; that

the satire on French manners is full of falsehood and exaggeration; and that, on the whole, the *Nouvelle Héloise* is a bad novel, and a middling book, in which there are some very fine passages.

Emilius is a higher species of writing: it is, of all the works produced by Rousseau, that in which he has written with the truest eloquence, and introduced the most genuine philosophy. Although the plan of education he proposes be carried somewhat to excess, as every thing is with him, it is impossible not to acknowledge that there is much in it to be commended. He borrows the ideas of Locke upon infancy, but Locke only reasons, Rousseau persuades. In many respects he has made a sort of revolution, which in philosophy, as well as in matters of taste, is always a cause of triumph. His characters are interesting, and the diction has great sweetness. Whoever has children to educate, will gain much by reading Emilius: while the profession of faith of the *Savoyard Curate*, which is not a very good treatise on philosophy, is an excellent lesson of toleration.

I confess, with regard to the *Social Contract*, that the strange manner in which terms in politics are employed, twisted from the ordinary sense given to them, the affectation of calculations and geometrical analyses, the obscurity and the dryness of the style appear to me to smother some useful truths which might be found in it. It is, in fact, nothing but a commentary, and that a very confused one, upon *Locke on Civil Government*. The

Letters from the Mountains are only good to a Genevese. I do not mean to include here some passages of small importance, as that on *Theatrical Imitation*, another on *Perpetual Peace*, a *Fragment on Political Economy*, and others.

The best written work, the work most finished in all its parts, is the *Answer to the Archbishop of Paris*; it is in every way a chef-d'œuvre. It may be proposed as a model of discussion, of eloquence, and light pleasant raillery; it takes all tones, and does not misuse any. It is forcible in its dialect, pathetic in its movements, vehement without being violent, and full of raillery without being sarcastic. Nothing can be finer written than the Address to the Porch of Surat; few things in our language are of equal beauty.

We may again observe, that not having produced any thing which supposes a grand imagination, a vast plan, or profound views, Rousseau can never be brought into comparison with the two greatest men of our age, Voltaire and Montesquieu; both these have erected splendid monuments, which do immortal honour to their nation. With so many errors in his philosophy, and so much inequality in his style, he can only be called a man of genius, who deserves to be regarded as one of the most ingenious of sophists, and the most eloquent of rhetoricians.

He has written *Memoirs of his own Life*, which will not be the least curious part of his works, whether as a history or a romance. Those

who have seen them say that he very candidly acknowledges his faults and his errors, but that he is always interesting. In this case his self-love is gratified in every way. Rousseau undoubtedly must excel in writing of himself, if it be true that an author ought above all things to be very full of his subject.

You will perhaps be gratified with reading a letter written by Jean-Jaques, in 1761, to the woman who had taken care of him in his infancy, and who remainded at Geneva. This which I send, is copied from the original: the letter has never been printed.

Montmorency, July 22, 1761.

"Your letter, my dear Jacqueline, arrived to "rejoice my heart at a time when I was little in a "state to answer it. I embrace a moment of rest "to thank you for your remembrance and your "friendship, which are always dear to me. For "my part I never cease thinking of, and loving "you. Often amidst my sufferings I have said, "that if my good Jacqueline had not taken so "much pains to preserve my life when a child, I "should not have suffered so many ills when a man. "Be assured that I shall never cease to take the "most tender interest in your health and happi-"ness, and that it will always give me very sin-"cere pleasure to hear from you. Adieu my dear "and good Jacqueline; I say nothing of my "health that I may not distress you: heaven

" preserve yours and grant you all the good things
" you can desire. From your poor Jean Jaques
" who embraces you with all his heart.

(Signed) " ROUSSEAU."

July, 1776.

The secession of Mademoiselle Dumesnil has not made much noise. She is not regretted, because she has been the object of regret for a long time, while she was yet to be seen continually. The memory of this actress will, however, live as long as the French Theatre endures. Never will Merope, Agrippina, Semiramis, be seen upon the stage without all who have known her calling to mind how admirable she was in characters of that description. She has contributed very little to the progress of the art, but she has cultivated it in a manner perfectly original.

Her talents have often been compared with those of Mademoiselle Clairon, — of an actress whom Melpomene will yet weep for a long time, for the loss of whom she can indeed scarcely ever be consoled. It appears to me, however, that there is between these two great actresses the same kind of difference that an impartial judge will find between Skakespeare and Racine. If in the works of the one we find bold and striking beauties, the other is distinguished by a *tout-ensemble* infinitely more rare and valuable, by a perfection always well sustained. It is the very defects of the English poet, his inequalities, his trivial familiarities, his

monstrous dissonance, which shew off in a more striking point of view the brilliant strokes that sparkle all over his writings. It is the elegance, the perfection even, of the works of Racine which sometimes render the beauties in detail less conspicuous, at least to common eyes. Both were born perhaps with equal powers, with equal elevation of genius, but the one abandoned himself to the fire and ardour of his imagination, the other knew how to regulate the ebullitions of genius by skill and cultivation. The one is inimitable even in his defects, the other is a model to which few can ever attain, but in following whose steps even at a distance, it is impossible to go astray. If one carries off in triumph the suffrages of the multitude, even where they are not merited, the other charms alike both the multitude and the man of genius. His lessons, and his examples will be the eternal admiration of all great artists.

I present you now with a letter which appears to me of so curious a nature that it well deserves a place in these records. Setting aside the merit of the style, the warmth and *naïveté* of which are much to be admired, it will be found to contain a very masterly and very learned dissertation upon the dignity of a ballet-master. From it we learn that the Royal Academy of Music always preserves the same spirit, and that there is no institution in the kingdom more proud and more jealous of its ancient prerogatives. Such is the happy effect produced by

music in France. But is there not some reason to fear that a patriotism so respectable may diminish every day, considering the daily increase of our taste for *ultramontane* music, and the strange enthusiasm inspired by the Chevalier Gluck and other German composers. Madame Gardel will have no doubt of this, since, in spite of her remonstrances, Noverre has just received from the managers of the Opera, the appointment of first ballet-master, and is even, according to a recent decision, to commence his career in a very short time with the pantomime of *Apelles and Campaspe*.

LETTER *from Madame Gardel to the Marquis of Amezaga.*

I proposed myself the honour of writing to you, Sir, to solicit you to procure me admission to the amphitheatre at the Opera, to which I have every possible claim, considering all that I have done in providing subjects, not to mention four of my children, two of whom support a very respectable situation there. But at present a more important object occupies me. O you! my ancient friend, who have ever been so at all periods of my life, fortunate or unfortunate, you can surely never have expected the event that I am now going to lay before you.—Who would believe that Gardel, who for nineteen years has been in the Opera at Paris, who has rendered himself cele-

brated there, who is so commendable for his great talents, for his exact attention to his duty, for his mildness, his obliging behaviour, who has sacrificed his own property) for he has spent twenty thousand livres, which were my fortune) to procure places, without number, as lucrative as they were honourable: that the administrators who made use of his credit to obtain favour from the Queen, should be capable of bringing underhand a stranger who has twenty times tried to hedge himself in at the Opera, and could not succeed! They could not then think of the injustice to displace, whom? the Queen's master, the director of the ballets at Court; cherished by the public, beloved by his companions, who for six years has composed the most charming ballets in the world. Every body remembers *Ernelinda* brought out at Court by him, which represented a siege. The Countess de Noailles did me the honour to say to me, that the Marshals of France enquired where Gardel had learnt the art of war, and that His Royal Highness the Dauphin had thought of nothing else all night, with a thousand other things as polite and obliging as possible. And now to see him treated as a child, a scholar!—They have dared to propose to him being successor to the Sieur Noverre, who would be a good model for him, who would give him good advice—they have dared to say this to Gardel, who in England is always called the *famous*, the *celebrated* Gardel.

My son is good, mild, humble, polite, and he must be imposed upon by a Charlatan!

The said Noverre arrives with one of those letters of recommendation (which is given like a ticket to a stage-coach) from the Empress to the Queen, saying that she wishes the man in question may be permitted to compose ballets, provided that does not interfere with the ballet-master —divine words! worthy the goodness and magnanimity of her Majesty's soul!—Her Majesty the Queen might be ignorant, as well as the Empress, that the place of ballet-master at the Opera is immoveable, like that of the first president, that it is hereditary from the first to the first dancer; that a stranger has no right to it, except in the case of abdication, as happened with M. Dupré.—But my son has no desire to give up his right, and become only a miller from having been a bishop; to be subordinate to a master from the country, and from Germany. Commonly these gentlemen come to Paris to improve themselves, not to give lessons to our great masters. The little Noverre has got too much ambition and self-sufficiency into his head. Thirty years ago, when he came to propose himself, he was sent off to the fairs to amuse the rabble with Chinese ballets. It was the favourite herself that sent for him, but when Messieurs Laval and Lani made a representation of their rights, his Majesty, and even Madame de Pompadour, yielded to the justice of their

cause. The little man to make himself amends, went and ruined Mademoiselle Destouches, and the Prince of Wirtemberg, putting fire and flames into his ballets, which could not be kept up but at a very great expense; for as to dancing there is nothing like it, and that will not do for the enlightened public at Paris; they will soon be weary of these ballets, where that fine art is entirely neglected.

Pardon me, Sir, if I am detaining you so long, but it is a relief to my mind. I cannot bear injustice! though as to my son, what injury will it do him? he will be obliged to go into foreign countries, whre all arms are open to receive him, and in a few years he will make a most splendid fortune at foreign courts. His dancing, his harp, his violin, his fine compositions, his amiable character will gain him countenance and distinction every where. Sir, I am as humble as my son, when justice is done me, but when I think others want to humble me, I lift up my head like a cedar; could any thing be finer than what Gardel said to these gentlemen. *How do you know what I can do? Try me for a year, and if I be really an ass, as you seem to think, if I do not in that time put union and œconomy in your concerns, if the public be dissatisfied with me, I yield, and will go and seek my fortune elsewhere. But confess that such a proceeding as this cries to heaven for vengeance.*

Adieu my dear Marquis, let us recal to our

remembrance the good times past. I am with the most perfect respect your humble servant.

GARDEL.

Pardon my incoherence, but my indignation is very great.

September, 1776.

As Alexander would only be painted by Apelles, it appears very natural that M. de Voltaire should chuse to be his own painter; that to efface for ever the recollection of the impertinences put forth by La Beaumelle, Freron, Desfontaines and many others, not to omit the original caricatures, of M. Huber, our illustrious patriarch should think there was no means so effectual as to write his life himself. His *Historical Commentary upon the Works of the Author of the Henriade,* contains only an abridged notice of a part of his writings, for there are many which he has not thought proper even to mention; but on the other hand we find a very pompous account of his connections with the great people of the world, and a very edifying enumeration of his good works, with a collection of original pieces brought forward as proofs of them. Madame du Deffand, who cannot digest the author's not having once mentioned her in the work, says that he never wrote any thing worse, that it is a mere flat inventory of all his old rubbish. How rarely soever such a misfortune may happen to Madame du Deffand, she will probably now find that she is single in her opinion. The commentary

is full of most charming details, and is written in a style of uninterrupted gaiety. One can scarcely read any thing more light and airy as to the thoughts, or more agreeably written; and it is much to be doubted whether the work would have gained in any respect by having been written thirty years sooner.

M. Germain François Poulain de Saint Foix, born at Rennes in 1703, Historiographer of the Order of the Holy-Ghost, died at Paris, towards the end of July. Literature is indebted to him for several valuable works. His Dramas, although in a style very inferior to that of our first masters, display in many instances great ingenuity in their composition, and are written in a spirited and pleasant style. *The Oracle* and *The Graces* will long maintain their ground on the French stage. In his *Essays on Paris*, and his *History of the Order of the Holy-Ghost*, there is a great deal of very curious research, and a number of interesting anecdotes. M. de Saint Foix's style is in general simple, with great purity, as well as clear and natural. This is a merit which cannot be appreciated too highly, since the affectation of wit, the jargon of metaphysics, and pretensions to fire and genius, have made it so rare.

The character of M. de Saint Foix, formed a singular contrast to that of his writings. The author of *The Graces* was one of the most dry and uncouth mortals breathing. His adventure

with a Chevalier of Saint Louis is well known, how he fought with him about a glass of capillaire, and got a cut from his sword, yet still persisted in asserting that capillaire was miserable stuff. He had in the course of his life, perhaps twenty affairs of the same kind, upon equally important subjects, and though always unfortunate in them, nothing could correct so strange a mania:—a kind of mania not very common among Messieurs the Literati.

If his writings were in opposition to his character, they were not less inconsistent with his tastes. M. de Saint Foix's works of imagination are all written in a style of amenity and courtesy, but all his judgments in literature are severe to a very great degree, not to say unjust. He esteemed no works but those of a vigorous and austere cast. Corneille was his idol; Racine he thought had too much softness and sweetness. He had taken, I know not why, the most decided aversion to Henry the Fourth, and one of the last occupations of his old age, was to collect a great number of materials, which he said were to destroy the enthusiasm of the French for the memory of this good King.

At the first performance of *The Philosophers*, M. de Villemorien, one of the farmers-general, meeting M. de Saint Foix in the lobby, came up to him with a very eager air and said: "*You have seen the Philosophers, Sir?—are they not very amusing?*"—*Not so amusing*, answered our Breton Gentleman, in that drawling and uncouth manner so peculiar to him, *Not so amusing as Turcaret.*—

It will be recollected that Messieurs the Farmers-general had offered Le Sage a hundred thousand livres, not to have *Turcaret* played. But Le Sage, though in extreme poverty, preferred gratifying his revenge to making his fortune.

Since Saint Foix's death, a sixth volume of his *Historical Essays* on Paris, has been published. This new volume contains, like the others, some detached thoughts upon the points in which our manners, habits and customs are conformable with, or vary from those of other nations. It besides contains his *Turkish Letters*, and all that he published in different journals upon the curious story of the *Man with the Iron Mask*. The first part of this volume consists of only fifty pages, and among some curious anecdotes, there are many very common place things;—things which moreover have no connection whatever with the principal object of the work. The public have seen with pleasure, a republication of the *Turkish Letters*. There is one among them upon the Regent Duke of Orleans, which contains some interesting details.

If the manner in which our Memorials for the Bar are written at present, is sometimes not very consistent with delicacy, and not without inconvenience as to domestic security, it must be confessed that it contributes wonderfully towards acquiring a knowledge of the human heart, and that malignity ould never have devised a resource

more abundant for supplying the loss of those humorous libertinisms so commonly to be found in our ancient comedies.

The Memorial which Madame de Beau-Sejour has just published against M. Victor de Riquetti, Marquis de Mirabeau, first Apostle of the Gospel of the Great Quesnai, is indeed one of the heaviest productions of the age. Not a single stroke of wit, not an eloquent phrase is to be found in it, but we find what is better, many very precious anecdotes, several pieces truly original, and which would undoubtedly have been lost to posterity, if the Lady Mary Genevieve de Vassan, wife to the said Marquis de Mirabeau, had not collected them with care, or if her advocate had not thought proper to confide them to all the good people of Paris. Had the memorialist confined herself to proving that M. de Mirabeau was the worst husband possible, the most disorderly head of a family, an œconomist devoid of œconomy, the most wretched calculator, the most ignorant farmer, his character would have excited only indignation and ennui. Stupid as the author of the memorial appears, he seems duly to have felt that his subject might be handled to much more advantage. He has made his hero speak for himself, he has exhibited him in *deshabille* in the interior of his family, in the intimacy of his epistolary correspondence. All the passages in which M. de Mirabeau paints so forcibly his own character, his principles, and his most secret sentiments are inappreciable.

As a complete answer to the unworthy calumny which has been circulated against the *Friend of Man* and his disciples, of preferring riches to *population*, it is sufficient to observe, that M. de Mirabeau has not only been the father of eleven children, by his wife, but that, after the manner of the ancient patriarchs, he has maintained in his household several other women, for the sake of increasing the number of his family. In this he has succeeded perfectly, though his exceeding zeal in the cause of population, has many times exposed him to very disagreeable consequences, which have been extended to his wife.

If M. de Mirabeau was deficient in piety, it must be owned, that there never was a greater hypocrite, and this is what we should be very unwilling to suppose; all his letters are full of God. "Order," says he, "is the characteristic of every "thing that comes from the hand of God; to "man alone does it belong to deviate from this "law, in virtue of his free agency, a gift bestowed "only upon him, and of which he will have to give "a dreadful account." Again: "If God had "not thought me proper to be placed at the head "of a family, he would not have placed me there. "He knows well that I was never urged to any "thing by personal vanity, that I neither humble "or exalt myself, that I never oppress my depend-"ents, and that I endeavour, on the contrary, to "assist them. *Blessed are the meek, for they*

"*shall inherit the earth.*" So, being one of the meek, to whom the earth was the proper inheritance, he ruined himself by purchasing the duchy of Roquelaure.

After the above declaration, it is very clear that it was not from vanity, but solely from a taste for harangues, that he wrote to his wife:—"Tell "the Vicar of Bignon to prepare an harangue for "me, without which I will see no black coats."—There is every reason to think, moreover, that it was solely because he considered gratitude as one of the first of virtues, that he obliged the Vicar of Roquelaure, when he had purchased his duchy, to say to his congregation, from the pulpit, "That "they ought to thank God for having given the "country a master of a mild and equitable cha-"racter, and of a race accustomed to command "mankind."

However clear and enlightened may be the principles which M. de Mirabeau has laid down upon the subject of government, they may be still farther elucidated by the happy manner in which they were applied in the government of his own family. "In fact," he says, "a wife is the "upper servant of her husband, and the husband "is the first guardian of his wife. You see that I "do not mince the matter, or endeavour to veil "over my mode of thinking; whatever sentiments "you may entertain adverse to these, are contrary "to all laws, divine as well as human."—Again: "I have always considered your property as "mine; we only unite ourselves in marriage on

"that account; it is not your interest to make "me think otherwise, that would disgust me ex- "ceedingly." And farther; "A long habit of "reflection places me above the fear of being too "confident of my own understanding. God will "only call me to account for what I may have "done contrary to the light I possess, or without "having reflected upon the matter sufficiently. I "have told you, very clearly, in my letters, what "I would do for the present, and what I desire "you to do. If you mean to be refractory, your "task will be *dictated*; I hold myself to be of as "much importance as those husbands to whom "their wives pay all possible deference and sub- "mission; I will be chief in the counsels of my "family, and the rather, as I shall know well how "to render to every one what is their due."

Not among the least curious parts of the memorial, are the passages from M de Mirabeau's letters, in which he gives himself up without reserve, to the heart-delighting sensations inspired by his literary successes. These ebullitions of self-love are in a style of frankness and familiarity so new, that I cannot refrain from giving you some of the most select. "For the rest, you will soon "know that my proofs are made in the face of the "public, and my engagements in this respect, for "a wrk which has such prodigious success, that "great and little are always at my door, and that I "cannot appear in public for fear of drawing a "crowd about me; it is only a book that has

" made this prodigious noise, which acquires me so " much homage from the whole earth, both in " visits and letters, from kings to blackguards, " which is already translated into three lan- " guages. Reputation is not wanted in your fa- " mily." And in another letter, speaking of himself, he says, " I am the man whom all the *un-* " *known* world comes to see, from curiosity; the " honest man, by distinction. It is very much " rumoured that I am to be made *sub*-governor to " the children of France: I say to those who " have mentioned it to me, that I will never be a " *sub* any thing; I will not take even the post of " a *sub*-farmer.

When he quitted the castle of Vincennes, where he was confined for I know not what work: " I tasted," he says, " the sweet pleasure, not " only that all Egreville, but all Nemours also, " were every where in double and triple rows, at " the windows, and upon the house tops, to see " me pass. The same eagerness was observable " in the capital, but the modesty of my conduct " put an end to it." What may appear at present, more admirable than the *modesty* of this account, is, that in fact, these details are not at all exaggerated. His work called the *Friend of Man*, had a most extravagant run; the great words, *humanity*, *virtue*, *liberty*, *property*, which are scattered so profusely over every page, imposed upon the majority of his readers; the title alone was sufficient to seduce the world at large. A work

written in favour of the people, and attacking, directly or indirectly, the abuses of the existing government, must be very detestable indeed, not to excite a great sensation. M. de Mirabeau's book certainly contains some important truths, amidst an extreme confusion of ideas, with a sort of warmth and jargon of sensibility, which always catch the multitude extremely. They have not forgotten in the memorial to advert to the anecdote of the English manuscript whence M. de Mirabeau is said to have taken the greatest part of his work. This anecdote, however, appears to rest upon very vague conjectures, which it would be a waste of time to investigate.

For a long time Jean-Jaques has not given the world any opportunity of talking of him. If the character he has assumed be not that of a true philosopher, it is at least certain that no philosopher ever supported his character better. Shut up at the top of a fifth story, concealing himself from the world, and appearing to have renounced all idea of celebrity, he only quits his retreat, and the labor on which he lives, to take a walk alone, or with his better half. An accident that happened in one of these walks, has for a moment brought him again into notice.

On the road to Menilmontant, he was met by the carriage of M. de Saint-Fargeau. As it was going very fast, he had not time to get out of the way quick enough, and a large Danish dog which

was running before the horses, paying no kind of respect to philosophy, pushed him aside and threw him down. M. de Saint Fargeau stopped the carriage immediately and flew to his assistance. He was not aware at first who he was, but when he recognised the author of *Emilius* his apologies were redoubled, and he pressed him eagarly to get into the carriage, that it might convey him home. This the philosopher declined very peremptorily, and returned home on foot, without any other injury than some slight bruises on the face. The next morning, M. de Saint Fargeau's first care was to send and enquire after Rousseau. "*Tell your master to chain up his dog,*" was all the answer he made. Could Diogenes himself have done more?

Madame Geoffrin's religion seems to have been founded upon two principles; that of doing all the good possible, and that of respecting very scrupulously all established customs, conforming with the utmost courtesy to the many variations which are constantly taking place in these matters. Those who know her best, know that she never departed from these principles.

Her last illness, which she has but very partially recovered, and which at first gave little hopes even of any amendment, has become in some measure, a public event, by the quarrels and divisions it occasioned in the circle of her society. In consequence of an attack of apoplexy, she fell

into a state of languor, which deprived her for a time of the use of her faculties, when her daughter, the Marchioness de La Ferté-Imbault, judged proper to refuse those persons access to the house who belonged to the society of her mother only, and not to her own. She shut the door very rudely against Messieurs d'Alembert, Marmontel, and others, all old friends of Madame Geoffrin's, but whom she herself could not bear, because they were Encyclopedists. This excellent woman, for such she is, though not less hasty than good, has proceeded in the affair with as little circumspection as if she had been doing the most common and natural thing possible; she even wrote the strangest letter imaginable to M. d'Alembert. The Philosopher only revenged himself by shewing the letter, which is really the height of absurdity.

The conduct of Madame de La Ferté-Imbault, has set the whole body of philosophers against her;—the orders of the *Lanterns* and of the *Lamps*,* have fairly entered the lists against the whole Encyclopedia. It was not doubted, that Madame Geoffrin, when she came to herself, would loudly condemn this proceeding of her daughter, but this has proved a mistake. She thought her daughter right as to the main question, but wrong

* It was an established joke at the house of Madame de La Ferté-Imbault, as a ridicule upon the Academies, and upon the spirit of party so common there, to call the philosophers the *lanterns* and the opposite party the *lamps*.

in point of form. She reproached the philosophers with not having known her daughter better, and with having done what she (Madame de La Ferté-Imbault) had often imputed to them, made a great noise with a thing which ought not to have made any. After scolding them well, a free and general pardon was granted; she observed that the *viaticum* and philosophy did not amalgamate well together, and that good breeding was necessary in every thing. *In fact*, said she laughing, *my daughter was only playing the part of Godfrey of Boulogne, she was defending my tomb against the Infidels?*

The first rays which evinced the return of her faculties, were her attentions to those around her, and the first cares by which she was occupied, were her good works. Although she is decidedly much amended in her health, she continues in a very debilitated state, and there is little hope that she can ever entirely recover. Thus has philosophy sustained within a few months, several severe losses; the death of Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse, that of Madame de Trudaine, the disgrace of M. de Turgot, and the illness of Madame Geoffrin. We have nothing to console us for all these misfortunes, but the elevation of M. Necker. The confidence which his Majesty has been graciously pleased to place in this illustrious foreigner, is an honour to letters, since it is to them he is indebted for being known. The triumph which merit has thus obtained over idle prejudices, ought

undoubtedly to be regarded as a proof of the progress that reason and light are making in France. May the happiest success justify, in the eyes even of the most prejudiced, a choice so worthy the virtues of our young monarch.

LETTER *circulated as one from the King of Prussia to M. d'Alembert, but which was never shewn by M. d'Alembert to any person.*

" For this time I may bless my stars,—and " you, if you love me, have some subject of re- " joicing, that I have happily escaped from the " jaws of death. The gout has made fourteen " vigorous attacks upon me, and it has required " much strength and constancy to resist them all. " I live again, however, for myself, for my people, " for my friends, and a little for science; but I " must tell you, that the rubbish you have sent " me from Paris, has absolutely disgusted me with " reading. I am old, and frivolities will no lon- " ger do for me. I love something solid, and if I " could return to my youthful days, I would " divorce myself from the French, and make a " league with the English and Germans. I have " seen many things since I have been in the world; " I have lived long enough to see a Russian sol- " dier wear my uniform, to see the Jesuits chuse " me as their General, and to see Voltaire write " like an old woman.

" I have little news to send. As a philoso- " pher, you do not concern yourself with political

" affairs, and my Academy is too humble to fur-
" nish any thing interesting to you. I have just
" declared a new war against law-suits, and I shall
" be more proud than Perseus, if, at the end of
" my career, I can destroy the cabal of this mon-
" ster with a hundred heads. You have a very
" good King, my dear d'Alembert, and I congra-
" tulate you upon it with all my heart. A wise
" and virtuous King is more formidable than one
" who has no other quality save courage. I hope
" I shall see you next spring."

The *Gentle Bernard*, who has so long enjoyed the greatest celebrity, without ever appearing to seek it, died towards the end of the last year, but in such complete obscurity, that I may very well be excused for not having noticed it sooner. For several years he had been lost to the world, and he was forgotten almost as soon as he had ceased to live in it. M. Bernard, though mild in his character, and particularly circumspect in his conduct, had gained few friends, for the very reason that he never had the courage or the impudence to make himself a single enemy. Confining his views to being urbane in society, he seemed to rely for all his happiness upon society, yet he was not a man calculated to enliven a company, his conversation was too reserved to be interesting, and though there was something naturally agreeable in his imagination, it was never brilliant. Even in his petulance, he always preserved a certain air of

good-breeding, whether it was that he had received from nature a frigid soul, or that by habit he had rendered it so. It might have been said, that he had subjugated all his sentiments, all his passions, to that spirit of gallantry which is the prevailing character of his works. Perhaps no philosopher was ever so consistent, so faithful to his principles as he was. His epicurism was more uniform, was better supported, than the stoicism of Epictetus, or of Cato. He had arranged the character he meant to uphold, as any one would arrange the plan of an opera. He had festivals for every period of his life, and if fate had not interposed to disturb such charming projects, no one would have succeeded better. He had found the marvellous secret of gathering flowers every where, and gathering them without thorns.

Few men were ever better treated by women, and few men ever knew how to enjoy such good fortune with less trouble and solicitude. Few men of letters have tasted more deliciously all that literary glory can offer of the most flattering kind, and never did any one experience less of the embarrassments which too often attend upon literary success. Born poor, he had the advantage of acquiring a tolerable fortune, without being guilty of meanness or servility. Every thing seemed to promise him a happy old age, when he was suddenly attacked with a very singular disease; it was generally ascribed to the life of pleasure he had led in his youth and which he wished to continue to a

period out of the course of nature. The history of this malady is a phœnomenon truly worthy the attention of a philosophical observer. It seized him in going out of his house, and had, at first, the appearance of palsy, but when he recovered from this state, he sunk into a sort of continued intoxication, as it appeared; this was ascribed, by the physicians, to some bad humour which spread itself, all at once, over the fibres of the brain. His ideas, preserving the same turn, the same character, had totally lost all connection; he knew people whom he had been accustomed to see, when they fell in his way; he thought of doing every thing that he had been accustomed to do, what he said was with the same elegance, the same choice of expressions as in former times; but he could not remember from one moment to another what he said or intended to say, what he had done or intended to do. His memory only acted by starts. It might be said that the thread of his ideas was cut in a thousand and a thousand places, and that his brain resembled a manuscript in which time had effaced the characters that were the most essential for the connection of the piece. Excepting this weakness in the brain, he seemed to recover all his former strength, he eat, he drank as usual, took his walks, and went to the opera; sometimes even attempted to correct his poetry. In this state he continued several years, without ever coming entirely to himself, and his death was almost as sudden as his first attack had been. The decla-

tion he was compelled to make before a notary, disowning the collection of his poetry, which had been published without his consent, was entirely the work of his niece, and her superstitious prejudices will, perhaps, deprive us for ever of a correct edition of her uncle's works; it is much to be feared that she may have destroyed already every thing remaining in his port-folio.

Having accompanied Marshal de Coigny into Italy, he was employed to write the journal of the campaigns of this hero. He has preserved, in some very fine verses, the remembrance of the days of Parma and Guastalla. Louis XV on several occasions honoured him with distinguished marks of his favour, he made him his librarian at Choisy, where he often did him the honour of conversing with him. It is upon a piece of ground given him by the King that the poet built his pretty little villa at Choisy. We are in possession of two Operas of Bernard's *Castor and Pollux*, and *The Wonders of Love*, of a poem called *The Art of Love*, and another entitled *Phrosina and Melidoro*, with a great number of fugitive pieces scattered about in different collections. These, however, by no means include all the productions of his pen, and the greater part of them are printed from very defective copies. He wrote for Madame de Pompadour a famous dialogue between *Love and Friendship*, and he also wrote an epithalamium upon the marriage of the Duke de Coigny truly worthy of Ovid. These two works, as well as

many others of the same kind have never appeared, and we are wholly ignorant what his niece and the person who had the care of him may have done with them.

On Thursday, the twenty-ninth, there was a public sitting at the French Academy, for the admission of M. de Boisgelin, Archbishop of Aix. This gentleman is known by several sermons preached before the States of Provence, and still more by that delivered at the consecration of Louis the Sixteenth. He is elected in the place of the Abbé de Voisenon. It has been remarked upon this new election, that, in a short time, the French Academy, composed entirely of ecclesiastics and great lords, will rather resemble a Council of State than a Literary Society. The most extraordinary circumstance at this sitting was, that it fell to the lot of the Bishop of Senlis to pronounce the eulogium of a libertine Abbé, and to that of M. d'Alembert to compliment a very religious Abbé, a great convert maker, M. Dangeau.

I had the honour of mentioning to you a letter, written by M. de Voltaire to the French Academy, concerning the new translation of Skakespeare, and read before that Assembly on the day of the festival of Saint Louis. It contained a criticism, not in a style of great candour and forbearance, both of the original and the translation; but it was pleasantly written, and excited a great deal of laughter. This was quite enough; an author, who

can raise a laugh, especially in France, is sure to be in the right. It was consequently decided almost *nem. con.* at Paris, that the author, who, for two centuries had been the delight of England, was nothing but a miserable stroller, and that his translators are fit for a place in Bedlam. A decision so severe has not frightened Sir —— Rutledge. This writer, the son of an Irishman, and born in France, thought that a knowledge of the two languages might authorize him sufficiently to combat the criticisms of Voltaire, and endeavour to re-establish Shakespeare in the public opinion. Penetrated with a deep veneration for the author of *Othello*, he dared to defend him against the author of *Zaïre*; but although he made it a law to himself to expose the errors, and even the bad faith of Voltaire, he did it with so much decorum, with so much respect for old age, and a renown so deservedly acquired, that he might almost be supposed animated with the double ambition of displeasing at once the adversaries of Shakespeare and his enthusiasts.

If Sir —— Rutledge has had the merit, so rare in a man of letters, of having preserved the strict rules of good breeding, as far as relates to society, he has not confined himself within equal bounds in speaking of the French stage. He cannot think that the introduction of persons from among the lowest of the people is, in all cases, degrading to tragedy; he thinks, on the contrary, that it is often essential to bring them forwards, and then they must be made to speak the language adapted to their situation. Shakespeare introduces very low cha-

racters in many of his tragedies; but they are never principal personages, they are only accessories. To exhibit Cæsar at once ambitious and popular, availing himself of his influence with the multitude, to undermine the credit of the patricians and ruin their power, he first presents us with a view of the rabble intoxicated with the splendid qualities of the conqueror of Pompey,—with plebeians who quit their daily labour, to prostrate themselves at the feet of that ambitious man, when he is drawing them to the capital where he hopes to be crowned. On the other side, we are shewn the senators alarmed, reproaching the multitude with their fickleness, recalling to them the idea of the great Pompey, whom they had so much loved, and seeking by their prayers and menaces to prevent the tumultuous festival which the spirit of sedition prepares. It is by such a scene that Shakespeare displays the dangerous character of Cæsar; it is by means of these accessory personages that the public is disposed to countenance the attempt made by Brutus, and consider the murder of Cæsar as a sacrifice made to the country. We know that a French author would have avoided bringing before the eyes of the audience, people, whose costume and whose manners are perhaps incompatible with the dignity of Melpomene. We shall certainly not hastily adopt the opinion of Sir —— Rutledge, and condemn a practice France has always respected; but we will venture to assert, that such a recital, even though written by Racine, would never

produce the effect of the scene put into action. If this assertion be not an incontestable truth, we must renounce the dramatic art, and confine our pleasures to hearing the epopœa recited. It results then from the above axioms, that the action of the English stage often wounds taste, and that the narrations on the French stage almost always weaken the interest. Happy the author who should be able to avoid both these rocks!—But this prodigy has not yet appeared.

In rendering to the dignity of the French stage all the homage due to it, we cannot forbear venturing here to ask a question. If Horace be in the right when he says that poetry and painting are subject to the same rules, why may not tragic authors admit that disparity among their characters which the greatest historical painters have employed with so much success. Let us see in what manner Guercino, whose compositions have always been admired, represents the carrying away of Helena. In the midst of the night when all is silence, the happy Paris conducts her without the walls of Mycene; the Trojan vessel is in waiting, fear and tenderness are imprinted on the delicate features of the lovely fugitive, love and triumph sparkle in the eyes of the ravisher. Hitherto the picture will be allowed correct by all our academic Aristarchs; but Guercino, not content to paint vaguely the flight of a woman, determines to point out to the spectator the particular character of Helen by the accessories introduced. Four slaves are following

who carry carefully after their mistress the objects most dear to her next to her lover, a casket of jewels, a little dog, a monkey, and a parrot.

M. de Voltaire, in his letter to the Academy, says, to justify his own translation of the play of Julias Cæsar, that the original is written partly in prose, partly in blank verse, and partly in rhyme; that the style is sometimes extremely elevated, sometimes of the utmost simplicity; that the commentator of Corneille endeavoured to copy this variety, and not only translated the prose into verse, the blank verse into blank verse, and the rhyme into rhyme, but also opposed bombast to inflated; and this he says is the only way to translate Shakespeare. In opposition to this hypothesis, Sir —— Rutledge asserts, that this was the only way to disfigure him. He says: "Blank verse is a thing unknown in the "French language; its genius will not admit of "it; take away rhyme and the effect of the versi- "fication is destroyed; every attempt that has been "made in this way can scarcely be called any thing "more than a harmonious and measured prose. "The case is very different in the English lan- "guage; from its abundance, and energy and still "more with the assistance of its terminations, "verses without rhymes may be constructed in a "manner as perfectly harmonious as if rhyme was "employed. Milton's *Paradise Lost* is in blank "verse, the language of it is full and sonorous, and "the measure is as complete and harmonious as "that of Greek or Latin poetry. The blank verse

" of Shakespeare has the same advantage. This " poet, in his tragedies, employs three modes of " expressing himself. He begins with prose; then " in proportion as his subject grows more elevated, " he has recourse to blank verse; and at length, if " he wishes to impress any particular sentiment, " any thought more sublime than the rest, with " still greater force upon the mind of the reader, " he puts it into rhyme. The transition from one " of these modes of writing to the other, is " always imperceptible, and managed with peculiar " address."

If the mixture of these three manners appeared barbarous in the eyes of M. de Voltaire, if he thought he should render it faithfully by a disparity which is really barbarous in the French language, it must be owned that this great man was not well acquainted with the English idiom. But it is not possible that he could be ignorant, that there are languages where this mixture is far from being a defect. He knows very well that the transition from blank verse to rhyme has been constantly employed by a dramatic author on whom he himself has often lavished the highest encomiums; by a poet who perhaps would have been reckoned the first of his age, if he had not lived in the same age with the author of the *Henriade*; in a word, by the celebrated Metastasio. All his Operas are written in mingled blank verse and rhyme. Let us do justice to M. de Voltaire, and far from accusing him of ignorance, believe rather that a patriotic

zeal has engaged him to disfigure a foreign author, whose genius, displayed in more favourable colours, might have obscured the glory of the French Theatre. We shall not say with Sir ——— Rutledge: *Frenchmen! renounce your tragedies at once, they are cold and languid.* We shall say on the contrary.—" Frenchmen! cherish and preserve " your tragedies,—think that if they have not the " sublime beauties so admired in Shakespeare " they are also free from the gross faults by which " his works are disfigured. You have done well " to give up your national music, since the great " composers of Italy and of Germany have very much " the advantage of your Lulli and your Rameau. " Oh! if your poetry were not more harmonious " than your music, one might indeed fairly say " *Frenchmen renounce your tragedies*; one might " then counsel you, not indeed to imitate Shake- " speare, but in adopting his principles to imitate " nature. You are often told that you ought to " embellish her, but indeed nature cannot be " embellished. This symmetrical garden, these " Tuileries which you admire so much, would " never form a subject for the pictures of Vernet; " that nymph who walks there and attracts your " eyes with her red heels and her Grecian head- " dress would never be painted thus by Greuze. " These two painters would sooner break their " pencils than profane them by what is called " *embellishing* nature."—But if art then, I may perhaps be asked, cannot embellish nature, of what

use is it?—I answer that its use is to teach us how to select from her—how to chuse among her various beauties such objects as will make a whole that nature herself would not disown. It is by these principles that the shepherd forms the nosegay which he designs for an ornament to the bosom of his mistress; it is by the same principles that the sculptor selects the different features which are destined to compose an Apollo or a Venus; every feature of the statue, every flower of the nosegay exists in nature, and all the art consists in the selecting and arranging them.

December, 1776.

A work has just made its appearance which might have been extremely interesting had it been published by a more skilful editor. The title it bears is: *Memoirs of an Unfortunate Princess* (Caroline Mathilda Queen of Denmark) *with letters written by her own hand to many of her relations and illustrious friends, upon a variety of subjects and on different occasions: translated from the English published in London.* One small volume 12mo.

These Memoirs contain a somewhat feeble apology for the conduct of Queen Caroline Mathilda, with a violent invective against the Queen Mother, Julia Maria, and Prince Frederick. They give not the least idea of the revolution which sealed the ruin of this Princess, nor of the circumstances which prepared the way for it, and

the springs which occasioned its success. The only man perhaps capable of writing a genuine history of these unfortunate circumstances will never permit himself to publish it: this is M. Reverdi, the author of *Letters upon Denmark*; he enjoyed for many years the entire confidence of the King, whose preceptor he had been, and was at Copenhagen at the moment of the revolution. Though he never would take any part in this fatal intrigue, he knew the principal actors in it too well not to see clearly into the consequences of their plans, and of the course they were pursuing. I one day asked him to sketch me the portrait of the famous Struensee. "It is Tacitus," said he, "who shall do it for me." He then read me what this philosophical historian says in his annals of a favorite of Tiberius. *Obscure and indigent, but bold and pragmatical, this man, by secret informations, pampered the cruelty of Tiberius, and wriggled himself into favour. By his detestable practices he became formidable to the first characters in Rome. He gained the ear of the Prince and the hatred of mankind, leaving an example by which the whole race of his followers rose from beggary and contempt to wealth and power.* "Setting "aside the cruelty," he added, "of which neither "the King or his minister could be accused, never "was portrait more strikingly like."

This work contains several letters from the Queen, the history of the Princess of Zell, wife to George the First, an abridgment of the lives of

Charles the Twelfth and Peter the Great, the Adventures of Charles Stuart, and an examination of the characters of the French, the English, and the Danes. These pieces are all given as the productions of the Queen's leisure hours, during her confinement in the castle of Zell. There is no great harm in that, and it would be an useless labour, to examine scrupulously whether they are really so or not. For the rest they contain nothing new, or particularly interesting; and thus much is to be said in favour of their authenticity, that these are not days, when it is greatly the fashion for authors, mounted up in their garrets, to borrow the aid of crowns and tiaras, as a means of promoting the circulation of their merchandise. This trick has become too common to make dupes any longer, and it is not every body in whose hands it will succeed so well as in those of the author of Ganganelli's letters.

A person of Dauphiné, by name Dupré, having passed his life in the study of chymistry, and in making experiments in that science, invented a sort of fire so rapid and so powerful in its operation, that it would be impossible to avoid or extinguish it; water even increased its activity. Experiments of its effects were exhibited in the presence of Louis the Fifteenth, upon the Canal at Versailles, and in the Arsenal at Paris, and others in some of our ports, which made even the most intrepid among our military shudder. When it was well

ascertained that a man in possession of such an art might soon destroy a fleet or burn a town, without its being in the power of any human assistance to stop the progress of the destruction, the King strictly forbade Dupré to communicate his secret to any one, and gave him a recompence to remain silent. The King was at that time, it must be observed, much embarrassed with being engaged in an unfortunate contest, but he could not bear the idea of increasing the miseries necessarily attendant on war; he chose rather to run the risque of a continuance of his misfortunes. A glorious example well worthy the imitation of all sovereigns who may be placed in similar circumstances. Dupré is dead, and has, it is universally believed, carried his fatal secret with him to the grave.

M. Crosley, an advocate and a *bel-esprit*, of Troyes, in Champagne, published a few years ago, a wretched work, entitled *Travels in Italy*, purporting to be by two Swedish gentlemen. Since that time he has, it should seem, taken a trip to England, and he has favoured the world with a rhapsodical account of his excursion which he calls *London*; it is in three volumes 12mo and is illustrated with a plan of the British capital. If any one wishes to see a collection of mean and trivial observations, of stale and miserable jokes, he has only to read M. Grosley's rhapsody. I speak with impartiality, and without ill-humour, for thank heaven! I have not read it. As there is

no reason to suppose so singular a circumstance to have happened to him as that he has got a new head upon his shoulders since he wrote the *Travels in Italy*, I conclude that his *Journey to London* is of a similar stamp, and am satisfied without knowing any thing further of it. Ignorance has its degrees as well as science; there is the ignorance of men of birth, and the ignorance of lacqueys; —that of M. Grosley is after the latter description. In his *Travels in Italy*, the two *Swedish Gentlemen*, speaking of the Count de Bielke, then a Senator of Rome, call him a German gentleman. They might have learnt from the first shoe-black of their acquaintance, that the Count de Bielke was of a distinguished family in Sweden. In the present publication, the *Journey to London*, the ingenious author, in speaking of the *North Briton*, which was the first essay in fencing, of the English Clodius *John Wilkes*, thinks that this periodical paper was called the *Lord Briton*. I wish the Trojan hero a good evening, and advise him to repose under his laurels; he has travelled sufficiently for his own instruction and that of others.

January, 1777.

Madame Geoffrin continues very ill, but her head, although still weak, appears perfectly collected. She has seen all her former friends, with the exception of Messieurs d'Alembert, Marmontel, and Morellet; these she thought she was bound to sacrifice to the just anger of her daughter, perhaps

somewhat to the pious scruples of her confessor, The three gentlemen above-named, are accused of having wanted to proscribe both the *viaticum* and the worthy Thomas-à-Kempis; the consequence was that they were refused admittance at the door of their ancient friend, and the consequence of this refusal was, that they took the liberty of circulating some very severe strictures upon the conduct of Madame de La Ferté-Imbault, towards her mother. All the circumstances of this philosophic embranglement have been very much exaggerated. Madame Geoffrin, however, saw that after the thing had been made so public, it was necessary to resolve either not to see her daughter any more, or not to see these gentlemen, and according to her usual custom she took the part most consistent with propriety and decorum. Her weakness will not permit of her holding a long conversation, but she still talks with a great deal of energy and vivacity; there are times when her mind does not seem to have lost any of that acuteness for which she was so eminent. The other day, at her house, the conversation turned upon simplicity of character: *There are so many people,* said she, *who affect it; but M. de Malesherbes there, is a man simply simple.*

That habit of benevolence, which was the distinguishing feature of her character, has not forsaken her. Having informed herself with great eagerness respecting the situation of M. Suard and what might be agreeable to him, she sent him,

within a few days three or four silver saucepans, which he thought he could not refuse without being unpolite. Very lately she compelled M. Thomas to accept a little box containing two thousand crowns in gold. He in vain represented to her that he had never refused the bounty her friendship offered, while he had occasion for it, but as he was then in very easy circumstances, he could not think of accepting so large a donation; his refusal was of no avail, she would insist upon his accepting it. He was therefore obliged ostensibly to yield, but he immediately remitted the box to Madame de La Ferté-Imbault. She, however, would not keep it, and deposited it with the money in the hands of a notary, for the use of M. Thomas.

A New-Year's gift, very ingenious, and containing a fine moral lesson, was this year sent by Madame de La Vaupalière to her husband, who loves play passionately. A very pretty and convenient sort of box has lately been invented for keeping fish and counters. Madame de la Vaupalière had a very elegant one made for M. de La Vaupalière, on one side of which was her own picture, and on the other a picture of her children, with this motto: *Think of us.* It is much to be feared, however, that this elegant device did not produce all the effect possible, since it is said that there is more play than ever going forward this winter. The Marquis du Barri the other evening

won six thousand three hundred Louis in a single stroke at faro.

Some time after the battle of Fontenoy, Louis the Fifteenth congratulating Marshal Saxe upon this happy event, said: *Indeed Marshal you have gained more than any of us by this battle: you were before swelled in all your limbs, but now you appear in the best health possible.* Marshal Noailles, who was present, immediately replied: *Yes, Sire, Marshal Saxe is the first man in the world whose swellings have been reduced by glory.*

We have not, for a long time, received any thing from the pen of M. de Voltaire, either in prose or verse. It is known, however, that, well worthy of imitating Sophocles in every thing, he has this winter written two new tragedies, one in three acts, the other in five, the subject of the latter is, we hear, taken from the history of Alexis Comnenus, but that is all we know about it, nor is it probable that the Abbé Coyer who has just arrived from Ferney, will be able to tell us more. This Abbé had intended passing three or four months with M. de Voltaire; he had even proposed to himself to announce so agreeable an intention immediately upon his arrival. In order to feel duly how very pleasant the proposal would have been to the host of Ferney, it must be observed that the Abbé Coyer, though in some of his early writings he has caught a tone of vivacity,

is in conversation one of the dullest of human beings, the very God of *ennui.* Our illustrious patriarch bore the first day with tolerable patience; but the next, talking to his guest of his travels in Holland and in Italy, he all on a sudden put a question to him which embarrassed him very much, *Do you know my dear Abbé,* he said, *the difference there is between Don Quixote and you?—It is that the Knight took inns for gentlemen's seats, and you take gentlemen's seats for inns.* This blunt remark completely disenchanted the poor Abbé, and he took his departure within the next twenty-four hours.

The Abbé Millot has just published *Memoirs Political and Military, serving as the foundation for a history of the reigns of Louis the Fourteenth and Louis the Fifteenth, taken from original pieces collected by Adrian Maurice Duke de Noailles, Marshal of France and Minister of State.* Six volumes.

The title of this work announces something both curious and important. It is extracted from about two hundred volumes in folio, and the greater part of the pieces which form this immense collection are original autographs; the others are copies made with particular care. The utmost gratitude is due to the illustrious depositaries of so precious a monument, that they have permitted it to be made subservient to instructing the public, and much is also due to the man, who, to accom-

plish views so important, undertook a labour sufficient to alarm the most determined industry and patience. The importance of this work, and the involuntary weariness which labour so severe must sometimes have occasioned, will entitle the author to pardon, for many instances of negligence and incorrectness which could not be passed over with equal indulgence in a less laborious undertaking. Perhaps the author would have spared himself much labour, and his readers some *ennui*, if instead of imposing upon himself the arduous task of giving a connected form to these Memoirs, he had confined himself to extracting all the pieces worth preserving, and arranging them in a chronological order, subjoining only, when that appeared necessary for elucidating the text, some clear and concise historical notes. In following this plan he would have saved himself all the trouble it has cost him to give an appearance of connection and unison to a work not susceptible of it; indeed his endeavours to render it connected have only contributed to making it appear longer and more defective,—often even more unconnected. It is much to be presumed that in simplifying his labour thus, the author would not have overcharged his book so much with reflections; these which aim at being very profound, which are probably intended also to be very edifying, are often extremely common-place, very useless, and, if I may presume to say so, exceedingly displaced in Memoirs which profess to be Political and Military.

The works hitherto published by the Abbé Millot, have been intended principally for the instruction of youth, and for this, the public is much obliged to him; but he should have felt, that in editing the Memoirs of a Marshal of France, and a Minister of State, he was not writing for the superiors of a College, or for children. All his moral reflections, extremely good in themselves, without making his book more instructive, have rendered it much less agreeable to the only readers who are likely to be interested by it:—this is a great pity.

Marshall Noailles is not only represented in these Memoirs as a great negociator, as a great minister, as a citizen full of courage and virtue, but he is also represented as a great warrior; his reputation as a general, would indeed have been very brilliant, if he had gained the battle of Dettingen, as the dispositions he had made gave reasons to expect. In the Memoirs, a letter of the King of Prussia's, upon this unfortunate day is cited, in which he entirely acquits Marshal Noailles, doing him the most complete justice, and all the letters of Marshal Saxe support a testimony so honourable. But the most solid and most glorious proof of the Marshal's military talents, is undoubtedly the memorial he sent to Marshal Saxe, on the twenty-first of January, 1748, tracing the plan of that march, which led to the success of the enterprize against Maestricht; an enterprize, the execution of which, terminated the war so happily. The Abbé Millot, after the

extract he has given from the memorial, compares it very ingeniously with the account given by M. de Voltaire, of this memorable expedition, in his *Age of Louis the Fifteenth*. "It is noble," says he, "to see Marshal Saxe after so many victories, "preserve an entire deference for a friend, whose "genius had so often directed his enterprises, but "it is still more noble to see Marshal Noailles "apply himself in silence, to planning great de- "signs, and abandoning all the glory to be de- "rived from their success."

A less important proof of the confidence placed by Marshal Saxe in M. de Noailles, but one which from its originality appears worthy of being recorded here, is to be found in the follow- ing letter. "It has been proposed to me, by my "master, to become a member of the French Aca- "demy. I answered that I did not even know "how to spell, and that it would be as beco- "ming to me, as a ring to a cat. The reply "made, was that Marshal Villars did not know "how either to write or read, yet that he was a "member. This is a persecution. You are not "a member, my master, and that renders the ex- "cuse I made more solid. Nobody has better ta- "lents than yourself, nobody speaks or writes bet- "ter, why are you not made a member? This "embarrasses me very much. I do not wish to "shock any body, particularly a body in which "there are so many persons of merit. On the "other side, I am very much afraid of doing ridi-

" culous things, and this appears to me very ridi-
" culous. Be so good as to favor me with a word
" in answer."

The Abbé Millot has not thought proper to give the answer entire, doubtless out of respect to the Academy, in which he wishes very much for a seat. He only adds, that M. de Noailles advised Marshal Saxe very strongly, to decline the proposed honour. "This is a kind of distinc-
" tion, says he, " not at all suited to a military
" man, and I should be very sorry to see my dear
" Count Maurice joined with a company which
" occupies itself solely with words and ortho-
" graphy." Philosophy did not at that time reign much in the Academy, and the literati were modest enough, or stupid enough, not to think that their task was, to rule the world, and to give lessons to Kings. How much have they come on since.

Although there are not in these Memoirs any of those obscure anecdotes which credulous malignity always seeks for so eagerly, there are here and there some of those traits which often paint the character and manners better than the most splendid actions. Take this for instance:—" Don
" Francisco de Velasco, having presented a peti-
" tion to the King of Spain, received no answer
" to it. He then presented one to the Cardinal
" de Portocarrero, and was not heard. He ad-
" dressed himself in the third instance, to the
" President of Castille, who said he could do

" nothing. At length he applied to the Duke " d'Harcourt, French Ambassador at Madrid, who " refused to meddle with the affair. What a go- " vernment, Gentlemen, said Velasco. Here is a " King, who will not speak; a Cardinal, who will " not hear; a President, who *cannot* do any thing; " and an Ambassador of France, who *will not* do " any thing." This description of the govern- ment soon became a bye-word in all companies.

In a letter to M. de Noailles, Madame des Ursins thus describes the details of her post. " In " what an employment, Great Heaven! have you " placed me. I have not a moment's rest, I have " not even the time to speak to my secretary. " There is no question now of sleeping after din- " ner, nor of eating when I am hungry; I am too " blest if I can get a morsel in haste, it happens " rarely that I am not called away the moment I " sit down to table. Madame de Maintenon " would, indeed, laugh heartily, if she knew the " whole history of my office. Tell her, I intreat, " that 'tis I who have the honour of taking his " Majesty the King of Spain's night-gown, when " he goes to bed, and that I carry him his slippers " when he rises in the morning. Thus far I can " endure with patience, but that every evening " when the King goes to bed with the Queen, the " Count de Benevento should charge me with his " Majesty's sword, a vessel of a certain denomi- " nation, and a lamp which I commonly empty " over my clothes, this is too ridiculous. Neve

" would the King rise, if I did not go and undraw " his curtains, and it would be a sacrilege if any " other person than myself were to go into the " Queen's chamber when they are in bed toge- " ther. Lately, the lamp had gone out, because I " had spilt half of it; I did not know where the " windows were, because we had arrived at the " place by night; I narrowly escaped breaking " my nose against the wall, and the King and I " were running against each other for a full quar- " ter of an hour, before we could find the win- " dows. The Queen was much amused with the " joke, but I have not yet been able to engage " her to place the same confidence in me that she " placed in her Piedmontese waiting-women. I " am astonished, for I certainly wait upon her " much better than they did; I am sure, that they " did not pull off her stockings, and wash her " feet half so gently and neatly as I do."

A great number of original letters of the Princess des Ursins, of the King and Queen of Spain, of Louis the fourteenth, Louis the fifteenth, Cardinal Fleury, and Marshal Noailles himself, give a particular value to this work, and by varying its style and tone, increase the interest prodigiously. The private letters of Louis the fifteenth paint with extreme truth, his good sense, his mildness, and his great kindness of heart. It is well known, that M. de Rose wrote almost all Louis the fourteenth's letters, but it is also well known, that the sole talent M. de Rose possessed, was that of im-

pressing on his style the character and grandeur which accompanied the most trifling actions of that monarch, and which seemed to belong to him exclusively.

The last volume of these Memoirs, contains some very important details respecting the negociations which preceded the war of 1755. It appears clear from the most authentic evidence, that our ministry desired peace very sincerely, and that it was their full conviction, that the English Ministry were determined, at all events, to go to war, which alone overthrew the arrangements they had proposed for the maintenance of a good understanding between the two powers. I have heard Lord Stormont say equally, that if the dispatches were seen, which determined the English Ministry to go to war, every one would be convinced that England ardently desired peace, and only declared war because she had been deceived by prepossessions similar to those which led France astray. Is it possible that idle suspicions and false reports, should embroil empires, as they do individuals, and that a misunderstanding should decide the counsels of sovereigns, and the fate of their people.

The Incas of M. de Marmontel has been criticised with extreme severity. If this book had been announced with a name less celebrated, it is to be presumed, that the bookseller would not have purchased it at the price of thirty-six thousand

livres; but it is also a bet of considerable odds, that its success would have been more brilliant, or at least more peaceable. The self-sufficiency of pretended connoisseurs, leads them, instead of enjoying talents, to consider only how they *ought* to be appreciated. They range all the writers of the same age in certain classes, assigning authoritatively to each one his place and his rank; every thing in opposition to this system mortifies and displeases them. Does a man of letters happen to publish some work which seems to raise him above the class in which he had hitherto been known, his merit in this new walk will be disputed by these self-created Aristarchs, with incredible tenacity. They will be desirous of punishing him for having stepped out of the path they had assigned him, of having transgressed against that subordination to which he had been condemned by their verdict. M. Marmontel's Tales are allowed to be charming, but in his *Belisarius*, and *The Incas*, it is decided that he has undertaken a task above his abilities. All the modesty with which he allows this latter work to be neither a history or a poem, cannot soften the anger of his censor.

Whatever pains M. Marmontel has taken to avoid every thing which might be construed into making pretensions to something above what the work really is,—how much soever he has sought to obviate comparisons which he did not wish to hazard,—these critics will persist in suspecting him of intending to write a poem in prose. We

will agree, as M. Marmontel says himself, that if he had pretended to write an epic poem, he must certainly be considered as having fallen very much below his model's; but we will venture to say that he has proposed to himself perhaps a much greater object, one at least infinitely more useful, that of teaching mankind a truth which concerns the happiness of all ages and all nations, which has been preached in this age more forcibly than in any other, but which had never before been presented under a form equally forcible and affecting. If *The Incas* be considered in this point of view, —if all the parts be considered as subordinate to this great end,—it will be found that the work is constructed with all the interest, with all the unity of which it is susceptible, and much credit will be given to the author for the richness and variety of his episodes; the art with which he has softened the colours of a too frightful picture, without diminishing the interest, will be extremely admired, and the reader will never want to determine whether it be a poem or a history that fascinates his attention; the defects even, which it cannot be denied are to be found, will gradually disappear, and leave no ill impression behind them.

It is a grand and noble, it is also a most just and happy idea, to shew religion herself eager to defend the laws of humanity against fanaticism; and it is on this grand idea that the whole edifice of *The Incas* is constructed. Could a theatre more vast and more striking be found for display-

ing the horrors of fanaticism, than that other half of the universe which is still reeking with the effects of its ravages. Could any thing more interesting be opposed to the manners of a ferocious and superstitious people, than the mild and gentle features which composed the characters of the unfortunate Peruvians, the most civilized and enlightened of all the American nations. Religion, if it wished to gain all hearts, would never chuse another character, other features, than those under which it appears in the virtuous Las Casas. This pious solitary is the true hero of the work, the most essential personage in promoting the end it has in view, and the only one who never appears without exciting the strongest interest. It may perhaps be wished that he were more frequently in action, but it would undoubtedly have been difficult to give a still greater influence to an old man and a monk. His character is not the less sublime and well supported; it is a true head after the antique. If all the personages who compose the picture, were sketched with the same interest, with the same vigour, we should not hesitate to class *The Incas* with any of the finest monuments of antiquity that remain to us. The virtues of Las Casas, the defender of religion and humanity, placed in opposition to the vices of Valverde, the herald of intolerance and superstition, form a lesson so much the more striking, and the more useful, as it is without bitterness, and free from every thing offensive. Considered in this light, there are few works the

object of which is more essentially moral, more worthy of the philosopher and the citizen. *The Incas*, in short, thus considered, will be found to merit as large a portion of eulogium as the patriarch of Ferney has lavished for ten years past upon the fifteenth chapter of *Belisarius*.

A Reverend Father, by name Griffet, author of some homilies, has just presented us with a work of another description: *Memoirs of Louis Dauphin of France, who died at Fontainebleau, the twentieth of December*, 1765, *with a Treatise upon the Knowledge of Man, written by his orders in* 1758. Two volumes 12mo.

We are told in an Advertisement, followed by a letter of the late Dauphiness, dated March the 13th, 1766, that these Memoirs were composed from papers sent by this august Princess to the author, and were revised by her. It appears singular that they have never been published till this moment. The most interesting part of the work is the account of the last illness and death of the Dauphin. The rest seems merely intended as a justification of this prince from the taste, which, according to the eulogium of M. Thomas, he was suspected to have for philosophy;—M. Thomas's eulogium is in fact less an historical document, than a treatise upon the education of Princes. If he endeavoured to make his hero a philosopher, it is not surprising that the Reverend Father has been no less zealous to exhibit him as a saint;—

but cannot a man be both at once?—A prominent feature in the work of Father Griffet is the anxiety with which he endeavours to impress upon his readers the Prince's great love for priests, and the apologies he makes for his having desired to become personally acquainted with M. de Montesquieu. The Abbé Proyart is still more eloquent upon this subject, in a work which appeared almost at the same time with Father Griffet's entitled, *The Life of the Dauphin, Father of Louis the Sixteenth, written from the Memoirs of the Court. Presented to the King and the Royal Family by the Abbé Proyart.*

These two works do not bring forward many facts which illustrate the history of the times, but some interesting anecdotes may be collected relative to the character of a Prince who had conceived a great idea of the extent of his duties, and who was anxiously solicitous to promote the happiness of the subjects over whom he was to reign. The historical part of Father Griffet's work is often interesting from the ease and simplicity of his style, but we cannot say as much of his *Treatise upon the Knowledge of Man.* The only *man* which this heavy treatise can teach us to know is the author himself, and this knowledge by no means repays us for the ennui which the acquisition of it has cost. Common place thoughts and ideas, divided and subdivided to infinity in the most wearisome manner possible, and at the same time the least proper to give a just idea of any thing,—

such is in few words the analysis of this Treatise. It would be hard however to dispute the compliment paid him by the Dauphin, when the latter had read the plan of the work. *I give you a most laborious task, heaven recompence you for it.*

Father Griffet may be pardoned the exception he evinces against philosophers; it is difficult to love what we resemble so little; but we cannot exercise the same indulgence towards the reflections he casts upon women. "Women," says he, "have such lively imaginations, their reasoning is "so shallow and superficial, that their judgment "never can have great weight, unless the question "be of the colour and arrangement of their dress." —This is revolting, and much less ingenious than what was said by the ambassador of Naples; "*That the women of Paris love only with the head,* "*and think only with the heart.*"

September, 1777.

LETTER *from M. de Reverdi, of Nyon, in Switzerland, to the author of these pages.*

The Count de Falkenstein * declined the relays which the bailiffs had orders to hold in readiness for him from town to town, in the Canton of Berne, and travelled after the manner of the country with the same horses, from Geneva to Schaffhausen. The crowd which constantly pressed about him seemed to annoy him very much, and

* The Emperor Joseph the Second, who travelled under that title.

occasioned him not to go out at all when he was at Rolle. At Lausanne, where he slept the first night, he observed in his chamber his own portrait, ornamented with garlands, and a very complimentary quatrain inscribed underneath. He was so much struck both with the verses and the picture, that he could not forbear inquiring to whom he was indebted for the compliment, when the host told him that it was to a Dutch lady who lodged in the neighbourhood, adding, as if without any design in what he said, that her house was not above three steps off, that it commanded the lake, and that from her terrace there was the finest view in the world.

The Count inquired whether, if he went to visit this lady, he might be sure of not finding company there?—the host said he might be very sure,—but the host led him into an error. Madame Diaquiere, who flattered herself with receiving this visit, had drawn around her as many presentable people as she could collect, particularly some very pretty women. Among the party was the celebrated Tissot. The Count appeared to be pleased with his conversation, and asked him, among other things, whether there were any literary people at Lausanne; Tissot begged that he would not require him to answer so humiliating a question. Two of the prettiest women having come forwards, and placed themselves on each side of the Count, he suddenly exclaimed in an extasy: *No, never in all my travels have I seen any thing so*

beautiful. But alas! it soon appeared that it was the *view* and not the *ladies* he was apostrophizing. To make amends, before he quitted the company he did make them some fine speeches; Madame de Blaquiere received the largest share of his compliments. This lady is daughter to the historian Rapin Thoyras, consequently by birth a gentlewoman. She has a son of the name of Casenove, by a former husband, who is in the Austrian service, and it was in order to have an opportunity of recommending this young man to Count Falkenstein that she sent the picture and the verses. When she mentioned the subject, he replied: *I have not any very great interest at Vienna, but here is one of my friends, who shall take down the name of M. Casenove, that he may be mentioned to the Emperor.* In effect, when he was at the camp in Syria he ordered M. Casenove to be presented to him, and recommended him to the General of Division, with whom he is now.

The pleasures and amusements of the late Queen were very simple and very uniform. She was exceedingly exact in adhering strictly to the arrangement of the day, and any thing which interrupted the established order of it disconcerted her very much. One evening M. de Maurepas coming into the drawing-room where she was, surrounded by the ladies of the Court, and perceiving nothing but an expression of lassitude and ennui upon every countenance, he endeavoured to

discover the cause of it. "*Oh don't you know,*" said one of the company, "*that this is the first* "*day of mourning? We cannot have our little* "*party at cards, and her Majesty is extremely* "*ennuyé.*"—*But there is piquet,*" said M. de Maurepas with the most serious air possible: "*Piquet may be played in mourning!*"—"*Piquet* "*may be played in mourning!*" exclaimed the company eagerly. The happy discovery was announced to the Queen, and the gloom that had been spread over the countenances immediately dispersed.

Among the irreparable losses that the arts have experienced this year, the Sieur Colalto, who played the character of Pantaloon at the Italian Theatre, must not be forgotten. He united with the merit of being an excellent actor that of having composed several charming pieces, among others, *Les trois Jumeaux.* The intrigue of this piece is conducted in a very superior manner, and it is full of situations perfectly original, and truly comic. Under the most ridiculous and the most hideous mask, there was no sentiment, no passion, which he did not express with the utmost warmth and truth; his talents carried off the greatest improbabilities of character, and incongruities of costume. In the piece above cited, where he played without a mask, he produced the most complete illusion, appearing under three characters wholly different from each other, so that he was

one while a passionate lover, then rough and uncouth, then harsh and brutal, then silly and idiotic, and varied his physiognomy to every character in such a manner, that it seemed almost like magic; even eyes the most accustomed to his countenance, could hardly recognize it.

In his real character, there was a modesty and simplicity of manner, very rarely to be found in a person in his situation. He knew no happiness so great as that of living peaceably in the bosom of his family, and doing good to any person in want of assistance, whom chance threw in the way of his generosity. He died of a very lingering and painful illness, during which, his children scarcely ever quitted his bedside, and he expired in their arms. He was deeply affected with their attentions, and his last words were expressions of gratitude for it. His eyes were cast upon an engraving of the *Paralytic, attended by his children*, beneath which was an inscription, purporting, *that if the merit of such a thing consisted in the truth of the representation, the artist had done well to place the scene in a country village,*—"*My children,*" said the dying man, with a feeble and fainting voice, *the author of that inscription did not know you.*"

A Letter from Ferney, dated October 12, 1777.

You desire, Madam, to know the whole truth of the pilgrimage made by M. Barthe to Ferney;

—read then, and you will see how it is possible for a man to damn himself, even when he thinks he is taking the most effectual method to insure his salvation.

Imagine then our hero, M. Barthe, coming post haste from Marseilles.—For what? to see M. de Voltaire?—No, not merely to see him; to read him a piece he had just written, a comedy in verse, of five acts, entitled, *The Selfish Man.* It was only on this condition, that he determined to undertake the journey, and the arrangement was concluded beforehand, M. Moulton having been employed as plenipotentiary to conduct the negociation. You know how much M. de Voltaire loves the latter; every thing, therefore, had been granted with the best grace possible. They went together to Ferney, where the old patriarch received them very politely. The author began to read his piece; here you will figure to yourself M. Barthe, with one eye fixed upon the manuscript, and a glass applied to the other, examining the countenances of the company, particularly of the master of the house. In the first ten lines, M. de Voltaire made several wry faces and contortions, which would have been most terrifying to any other author. Not a note of applause was uttered by any one of the company, through the whole first act; at the commencement of the second, M. de Voltaire was seized with a terrible fit of yawning, he said he found himself very much indisposed, he was exceedingly concerned, but he must

withdraw; and he retired to his own room, leaving the poor Barthe absolutely in despair. It had been agreed, that he should sleep at Ferney. Madame Denis took M. Moulton aside: "This grows too "serious," said she, "we must contrive that the "good man shall not sup here, my Uncle will "never be able to contain himself, and he may "say something that would distress us all very "much."

The hint was taken, the packets were replaced in the carriage, and the two visitors departed for Geneva. "He is not in a very good "humour," said M. Moulton.—"Very true," replied the poor author, "but you never tried to "set me off; you all observed the most profound "silence, you never once laughed."—"How! "would you have had us laugh in the presence "of M. de Voltaire? Occupied with the im- "pression you were making on him, do you think "I could hear a word of your piece?"—Judge, Madam, what sort of a night the author must pass after such an adventure. To console him, the next morning came a note from M. de Voltaire, earnestly entreating him to continue the reading of his piece, and assuring him; that a similar circumstance, to that of the evening before, was not likely to occur. What a promise!—What severe satire!—M. Barthe in spite of every thing that could be said to him, was vain enough to be the dupe of it. It would have been indeed very hard not to finish the piece when he had come so far on

purpose to read it. He returned to Ferney; M. de Voltaire received him with still greater politeness than on the former day, but after having heard to the end of the second act, gaping all the time, in the third he fairly fainted away with all the form and ceremony imaginable. The unfortunate Barthe was now reduced to taking his final leave without finishing the piece, and, which perhaps was still harder, without daring to fight with any body. Nothing but the excess of despair into which he was thrown by so cruel a scene could moderate the first transports of his fury. *Alas*! said M. de Voltaire, when he gave us an account of the scene, *if Providence had not stepped in to my assistance I know not what would have become of me.*

This adventure appeared to me too original to withhold it from you, Madam, but let me intreat you not to mention it to any one. The crosses which poor M. Barthe met with shall not prevent my rendering justice to his talents. I should be very sorry to wound his self-love, and I should be still more sorry, if the fit of ill-humour, which his importunities gave M. de Voltaire, were to prejudice the public against a work with which they are not yet acquainted.

In the parody of the Opera of Ernelinda, played at the Italian Theatre, M. Dugazon, as a woman, is no bad resemblance of Mademoiselle D'Eon, since she has been compelled to assume the dress of her sex. It is well known that on no other

condition than that of appearing in this dress could she obtain permission to appear again at Versailles or at Paris. Her carriage, nevertheless, her gestures, her manners, and still more the style of her conversation, all contrast wonderfully with the garb she has assumed, and however simple, however prude-like, may be her large black head-dress, it is difficult to conceive any thing more extraordinary, I may say more indecent, than Mademoiselle D'Eon in petticoats. "Undoubtedly," said she, the other day to a lady who was giving her good advice with respect to her conduct, "Undoubtedly I will be "very discreet, but modest—no, that is a thing "wholly impossible. Is it not however somewhat "curious, that after having been for so many years "a captain of dragoons, I should finish by being a "*cornet*."*

Among the novelties which have just appeared there is one which perhaps merits a little more attention than the others. This is: *An Apology for Shakespeare in answer to the criticisms of M. de Voltaire;*—translated from the English of Mrs. Montague.

If this work does not meet with the same applause in France that it has received in England, it must not be imputed entirely to want of skill in the translator. The pretended partiality of M.

* There is much more point in this remark in the French than in the English. *Cornette*, the word used, signifies equally, a *Cornet* an officer of horse, and a particular sort of female head-dress.

de Voltaire is combated with a partiality ten times more revolting. Great complaints are made that he has presumed to criticise Shakespeare without, as the author is pleased to say, understanding him. But with the exception of some details in which it is not surprising that a foreigner should be mistaken, this very author concludes with being entirely of his opinion. Is it not being so in fact, to allow that "Shakespeare wrote at a time when "learning was tinctured with pedantry, wit was "unpolished, and mirth was ill-bred. The Court "of Elizabeth spoke a scientific jargon, and a cer- "tain obscurity of style was universally affected, "James brought an addition of pedantry, accom- "panied by indecent and indelicate manners and "language. By contagion, or from complaisance "to the taste of the public, Shakespeare falls some- "times into the fashionable mode of writing, &c. "&c."—Again, that he had not learnt: "that "only graceful nature and decent customs give "proper subjects for imitation." And once more, that "Shakespeare's plays were to be acted in a "paltry tavern, to unlettered audiences, just emerg- "ing from barbarism."*—How many times has M. de Voltaire acknowledged that in all Shakespeare's plays there are passages written with a grandeur and a simplicity which savours in no respect whatever of depravity of taste and corruption of morals. How many times has he confessed that

* Preface to Mrs. Montague's Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespeare.

the great superiority of the English Poet consists in the art of drawing characters, of giving to every thing an air of truth, and of producing, in spite of most essential and multiplied faults, the principal effects proposed by the drama.

After crying sacrilege so loudly, because of some expressions, not very respectful, used with regard to the idol of the English nation, what shall be said of the prejudice which can accuse the author of *The Horatii* of painting the characters of the Romans only from the romances of La Calprenede, and Scuderi? What shall we think of the equity of a criticism upon Corneille, founded almost entirely upon passages taken from Otho, and Pertharites?— Yet notwithstanding all her injustice one cannot deny that there are some strokes of ingenuity in Mrs. Montague's work. The following perhaps best deserves to be cited, since it may be applied to more than one object. "The pedant, who bought at a "great price the lamp of a famous philosopher, "expecting that by its assistance his lucubrations "would become equally celebrated, was little more "absurd than those poets who suppose their "dramas must be excellent, if they are regulated "by Aristotle's clock."*

Never had any one in a private situation of life, and with a moderate fortune, so many claims upon the remembrance of society as Madame Geoffrin,

* Preface to Mrs. Montague's Essay.

and yet no sooner has she disappeared from the theatre of the world than she is almost forgotten. But for the homage which three of our literati have paid to her memory it would seem as if this singular and most respectable woman had not left behind her any trace that she ever existed; so true is it that what we call society is the most light, the most ungrateful, the most frivolous thing in the world.

The first work consecrated to the memory of Madame Geoffrin, is by M. Thomas, with the motto: *Nulli flebilior quam mihi.*

The second, from the Abbé Morellet, is entitled: *A Portrait of Madame Geoffrin*, and has for motto: *Quid virtus et quid sapientia possit utile proposuit nobis exemplar.*

The third bears the title of: *A Letter from M. d'Alembert to the Marquis de Condorcet upon Madame Geoffrin.* It has the following motto: *Quis desideris sit pudor aut modus tam cari capitis?*

To give in one word the different characters of these three writers, it has been said that the first *had reflected*, the second *had narrated*, and the third *had wept.* In the aim however at being concise there may sometimes be a want of truth and accuracy.

If there be a great deal of reflection in the work of M. Thomas, it is always the reflection of a soul of great sensibility, it is friendship, it is gratitude which collect with care every feature of a beloved image, and delight in the idea of render-

ing it interesting. In painting Madame Geoffrin such as she was in the eyes of her friends, every thing in her character and disposition, which may have wounded the feelings of those who only observed her superficially, is explained in the happiest manner possible. We see that the author only seeks to make her known in order to make her loved; that he analyses nothing but what he has deeply felt himself, and that all the fine spun turns of his thoughts have their primary source in the delicacy of his heart. Nothing from the pen of M. Thomas was ever written so simply, so naturally; and perhaps this little work ought to be regarded as the best chapter of his *Essay on Women.*

The Abbé Morellet's *Portrait of Madame Geoffrin* has a merit of a very different stamp, but if it be not a striking likeness it is not the fault of the painter. The smallest details are given with prodigious emphasis, it is even impossible to find the most trifling feature slightly traced. Every thing is conceived with solidity and powerfully sustained. Throughout, we see a man who paints with the utmost coolness, a philosopher above the illusions of sensibility, who, without permitting himself to embellish his model, proposes, as his great object, to exhibit it under the point of view the most proper to excite an emulation useful to the society—*of men of letters.*

Although M Morellet seems to have no secrets with his readers, though he seems to make a point of telling every thing that it was possible

for him to know of Madame Geoffrin, there is one article to which he seems to have thought a more particular attention was due, which he has developed in the amplest manner, upon which he even seems to have made very particular researches,—calculations still more clear and more exact than those which he formerly undertook, merely from attachment to the administration, upon the trade to the Indies. This favorite article is the eulogium of his heroine's *giving disposition*. Her *giving disposition*!—that word seems to have a most powerful charm to his ear; he has found the art of introducing it at almost every page, and always with some new grace. Is it excess of gratitude which has engaged the Abbé to celebrate so modest a virtue with so much *éclat*—perhaps with so much indiscretion?—No, the most lively gratitude is as simple, as delicate, as reserved, as the sentiment which has called it forth, and nothing in the world can occasion the Abbé Morellet to be suspected of suffering himself to be led away by exaggerated sentiments.

From the good faith, the exactness, the coolness, and more than all the spirit of calculation and detail with which our orator has taken the pains to make out a list of the alms and benefactions of Madame Geoffrin. it is much to be presumed that he has in his mind a project more important, more worthy of a philosopher than that of simply giving vent to the effusions of his heart, and that his secret is to be found in his motto:

Utile nobis proposuit exemplar, she has left an example worthy to be followed. O you!—fair ladies!—who aspire at the same distinction, at the same celebrity as the heroine of the Abbé Morellet, learn what you ought to do, particularly for *men of letters*;.. for as the author ingeniously observes in a note: *Something more than mere dinners are requisite to supply the place which this amiable woman sustained in the world.* Indeed, we cannot sufficiently admire the extreme condescension with which our good doctor endeavours to make himself clear and intelligible to every body. He knows that it is only by details we can really be instructed, and these are the details into which he is graciously pleased to enter.

" It was chiefly with her friends, with the " literati who formed her society, that she gratified, " often in spite of themselves, what she called her " *giving disposition.* She sometimes went to see " them for this purpose alone. She examined " their furniture; she tried to find out whether they " wanted a clock, a bureau, or any thing that " might be useful, and when she had determined " upon the present to be made, she was not " easy till it was done. I have been witness to " things of this kind more than once, and I only " relate what I have seen. But she did not con- " fine her bounty to such trifles. She was con- " stantly occupied with a goodness no less active " than affecting about the circumstances of the " *men of letters* who were the most agreeable to

" her, or whom their situations rendered particu-
" larly interesting. About the year 1760, she
" settled an annuity of six hundred livres on M.
" d'Alembert. She afterwards settled eighteen
" hundred livres a year more upon him, to take
" place upon her death; and at three different
" times allotted sums which together made four
" hundred livres a year more to be distributed by
" him in works of benevolence, such as she herself
" indicated. M. Thomas, in whom talents and
" virtues both directed to the same end, lend a
" mutual support to each other, had merited too
" well of Madame Geoffrin not to make her
" anxious to serve him. A terrible complaint in
" his eyes rendered him incapable of following his
" occupations, and her friendship seized this
" opportunity to force him to accept an income of
" twelve hundred livres a year. She afterwards
" made him a present of six thousand livres."

But the chef-d'œuvre of the Abbé Morellet's delicacy and frankness is, beyond dispute, the manner in which he gives an account of his own connections with Madame Geoffrin. Not a sentence will be found there which does not strongly characterise both the painter and his model.

" Of the twenty years that I enjoyed the
" happiness of belonging to her society, the former
" part passed without her *distinguishing* me in
" any way; I ought even to confess what she her-
" self has often said, that she had rather a dis-
" taste towards me; certain *forms* and *manners*

"for which I leave to my friends the care of "making my *apologies if they can*, prevented her "reconciling herself to me. I sometimes said to "her that she would one day love me, and that I "entreated her till then only to *support* me. That "time came." How ingenious is this turn of oratory, and how dexterously it spares giving a date which might inspire the reader either with a bad opinion of Madame Geoffrin's sagacity, or give reason to suppose her prejudices very obstinate.—He goes on:

"From that moment she never ceased to "evince the utmost interest for me, and to load "me with kindness. More than once I have been "obliged to refuse her benevolence, and to avoid "furnishing her with occasions for it. Those "which it was impossible to prevent were so well "chosen, and the manner of her obliging me was "so affecting, that the value of the kindness was "doubled. Whatever repugnance I may have to "troubling the reader with matters which concern "myself particularly, I cannot forbear mentioning "at what a moment, and on what an occasion she "settled upon me as she had done on M. Thomas "and M. d'Alembert, an annual income of twelve "hundred livres. I had written in favour of a "free-trade to the East Indies, a work she "entirely disapproved, owing to some opinions "she had conceived, *false* without doubt, but too "common and too generally received to take "offence with her for entertaining them. The mi-

" nister, whose views I had seconded in delivering
" my own sentiments, and they were well known
" before I wrote the work, went out of place before
" he could recompense my labours.* Madame
" Geoffrin came to me, and after having scolded
" me anew, with extreme vivacity, for writing
" what she called my *wicked memoirs*, added:
" *You see that you have not been recompensed;*
" *your fortune is in no way advanced by what you*
" *have done. Come, give me your name and*
" *designation from the baptismal register; then*
" *go to-morrow to my notary, you will find a con-*
" *tract there; I have placed fifteen thousand*
" *livres to your account,—don't say a word to any*
" *body, and dont thank me.* This is an exact
" statement both of her words and her actions.
" What can I add to this account that will not be
" more feeble than the reflections to which it must
" naturally give birth."

To make some amends to the reader, who perhaps will not feel all the value of so circumstantial a narrative as the Abbé Morellet's, he has inserted in his work some original letters of Madame Geoffrin's; but they are letters which were before in every body's hands. For the rest they certainly do equal honour to her head and heart. Two instances of the generous benevolence and kind disposition of this respectable woman we

* It is said that this statement is not quite accurate, however that has nothing to do with the story as far as it concerns Madame Geoffrin.

cannot forbear mentioning here; they are strokes which Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse thought might be added to the *Sentimental Journey* of Sterne, and surely Sterne himself would not have disowned them.

She had ordered two marble vases from the celebrated Bouchardon. They were brought to her by two of his workmen, when she observed that the cover of one was broke. "Alas! yes, Madam," said the workmen, "and our comrade "to whom this misfortune happened is so grieved "about it, that he dared not appear before you. "He is much to be pitied, for if our master were "to know it he would be sent away, and he has a "wife and four children."—"Well, well," said Madame Geoffrin, "he may make himself easy, I "shall not say a word about it."—When the workmen were gone, she reflected within herself, this poor man has suffered exceedingly from vexation, he must be comforted. Then calling one of her servants, she said: "Go to M. Bouchar-"don's and enquire for such an one, give him "twelve livres, and give three to his comrades who "spoke in his behalf."

One day it was remarked to her that her milkwoman served her very ill. "I know it," she said, "but I cannot leave her." "And why not, "Madam?" "Because I gave her a couple of "cows." An exclamation being uttered at this strange reason, "Why, yes," she said, "she was "selling her milk at my door, and my servants

came and told me that she was in terrible affliction for the loss of her cow. As they had been somewhat tardy in telling me this, I gave her two cows, one to replace that she had lost, and the other to console her for the affliction she had been under during a whole week. You see now I cannot leave her."

M. d'Alembert's *Letter to the Marquis Condorcet*, not having been sold, probably out of consideration for Madame de la Ferte-Imbault, on whom he would not revenge himself too publicly, I will venture to transcribe it here; omitting only such compliments as the author thought it necessary to pay those who have preceded him in the homage he offers to the memory of his friend.

"Much has been said respecting Madame Geoffrin's goodness, to what a point it was active, restless, obstinate. But it has not been added, and which reflects the greatest honour upon her, that, as she advanced in years, this habit constantly increased. For the misfortune of society, it too often happens that age and experience produce a directly contrary effect, even in very virtuous characters, if virtue be not in them a powerful sentiment indeed, and of no common stamp. The more disposed they have been at first to feel kindness towards their fellow creatures, the more, finding daily their ingratitude, do they repent of having served them, and even consider it almost as a reproach to themselves to have loved them. Madame Geoffrin had learnt, from a more reflected

study of mankind, from taking a view of them more enlightened by reason and justice, that they are more weak and vain than wicked; that we ought to compassionate their weakness, and bear with their vanity, that they may bear with ours. "I feel with pleasure," she said to me, "that as "I grow old I grow *more good*, I dare not say "*better*, since perhaps my *goodness* may rather be "weakness, as are the bad humours of others. I "have profited by what the Abbé de Saint Pierre "has often said to me, that the charity of a person "in affluence ought not to be confined to com- "forting those who suffer, it ought to be carried "also into shewing that indulgence towards their "faults of which they often stand so much in "need. Like him, I have taken for my motto, "these two words *give and forgive*."

"The passion of *giving*, which was an absolute necessity to her, seemed born with her, and tormented her, if I may say so, even from her earliest years. While yet a child, if she saw from the window any poor creature asking alms, she would throw whatever she could lay her hands upon to them; her bread, her linen, and even her clothes. She was often scolded for this *intemperance* of charity, sometimes even punished, but nothing could alter the disposition, she would do the same the very next day.

"As she lived but to do good, she would fain have had all the world resemble her; but she was very careful not to make her benevolence an annoy-

ance to others. "When I relate," she said, "the "situation of some unfortunate creature to any "one from whom I wish to procure assistance, I "do not break open the door, I merely stand at it, "waiting till they chuse to open to me." Her illustrious friend Fontenelle, was the only one with whom she proceeded in a different way. This philosopher, so celebrated for his talents, and so sought after for his numerous agreeable qualities unalloyed by any kind of vice,—who was almost without defects, because he was without warmth or passion, had also only the virtues of a cold heart,—virtues little active, which wanted stimulation to be put into action, but which a gentle stimulant would move. Madame Geoffrin sometimes went to him, and painted with interest and sentiment the situation of those whom she wanted him to assist. *They are much to be pitied,* he perhaps answered, adding some reflections upon the numerous misfortunes to which human nature is subject, but then adverted to other matters. Madame Geoffrin left him to talk on, and at going away said: *Give me fifty louis for the poor creatures I mentioned.—You are in the right indeed,* said Fontenelle, and the fifty louis were immediately produced.* Never did he mention the thing again, but was equally ready to give fifty louis more the next day if asked for them. The

* It is interesting to see at least that *Men of Letters* sometimes know how to give as well as to receive.

philosopher's benevolence may perhaps be thought somewhat dry, but at least he cannot be accused of ostentation. Heaven grant to all who have the means to give, a similar spirit, though with equal dryness and simplicity, and inspire some one possessing the active virtue of M. de Fontenelle's amiable friend, to put in action a sentiment which only wants to be awakened!

"Madame Geoffrin had all the tastes of a soul full of mildness and sensibility. She loved children passionately, she never saw one without feeling the utmost tenderness towards it; the weakness and innocence of the age interested her deeply; she loved to observe nature, which, thanks to our manners, is only to be seen in infancy. She delighted to talk with children, and ask them questions, nor would ever suffer the people with them to suggest their answers. "I had much "rather," she said, "hear the nonsense they "utter, than what you dictate."—Often would she say, "I wish the question was put to all those "unfortunate wretches who pay with their lives "the forfeit of their crimes, *Did you love children?* "I am sure they would answer *that they did* "*not.*"

"We may judge from hence that she considered paternity as the sweetest pleasure afforded by nature. But the more sacred she felt the pleasure to be, the more anxious she was that it should be pure and without alloy. She therefore earnestly recommended to those of her friends, who were

without fortune, not to marry, "What," sai "she, "will become of your poor children if they "should lose you early?—Think of the horror of "your last moments if you were to leave those "most dear to you in a state of distress." Some to whom this advice was given, married in spite of it; they brought their children to her, she wept, and became a mother to them. Not only did she wish to extend her benevolence to the utmost period of her life, she wished to continue it after her death by means of her friends; *those who are relieved,* she said, *will bless them, and they will bless my memory.* She placed out twelve hundred livres upon her own life, and that of a friend who had a very small fortune: *If you become rich,* she said, *give away the money for my sake, when I shall no longer have the power of giving.*

"Always occupied with those whom she loved, always anxious about them, she even anticipated every thing which might interrupt their happiness. A young man,* for whom she interested herself very much, who had till that moment been wholly absorbed in his studies, was suddenly seized with an unfortunate passion, which rendered study, and even life itself insupportable to him. She succeeded in curing him. Some time after she observed that the same young man, mentioned to her, with great interest, an amiable woman with whom he had recently become acquainted. Madame

* This young man was M. d'Alembert himself.

Geoffrin, who knew the lady, went to her, "I am "come," she said, "to intreat a favour of you. "Do not evince too much friendship for * * * *, "or too much desire to see him, he will be soon in "love with you, he will be unhappy, and I shall "be no less so to see him suffer; nay, you your- "self will be a sufferer, from consciousness, of the "sufferings you occasion him." This woman, who was truly amiable, promised what Madame Geoffrin desired, and kept her word.

As she had always among the circle of her society persons of the highest rank and birth, as she appeared even to seek an acquaintance with them, it was supposed that this flattered her vanity. But here a very erroneous opinion was formed of her; she was in no respect the dupe of such prejudices, but she thought that by managing the humours of these people, she could render them useful to her friends. "You think," said she, to one of the latter, for whom she had a particular regard, "that it is for my own sake I frequent "ministers and great people. Undeceive yourself, "—it is for the sake of you, and those like you, "who may have occasion for them. If all whom "I love were discreet and happy, my door would "be shut every day, at nine o'clock, except to "them *."

* The public, prejudiced against Madame Geoffrin, believed on the contrary, that she only received literati and artists at her house, to draw thither persons of quality. It is very certain that she had for some time appeared a good deal tired of our literati and

"Her indulgence for the poor was particularly conspicuous in listening to their conversation. She supported their babble with great patience, a thing so insupportable to goodness itself, if it be not proof against every thing. "Indeed," she would say, "I can manage very well, provided "they be but those downright babblers who can "go on for ever without wanting an answer. My "friend Fontenelle, who could bear them equally "well, used to say that they rested his lungs. "They do me a different kind of good; their per-"petual murmur is to me like the humming of "bells, which does not prevent meditation, but "rather invites to it." Babblers, who think themselves made to be listened to, and in whom the necessity of talking is an effect of vanity, were the only species of this genus that she had difficulty to support; but even with them she was anxious to conceal her impatience: "I always wish," she said, speaking of one of this description, "that "God would do me the favour of making me "deaf, without my man knowing any thing of the "matter; he would talk on, supposing I heard "him, and we should both be satisfied."

"With so much virtue, goodness, and bene-

their sparrings; it is still more certain that nobody attached a higher price to public opinion, better caught all its movements, or followed them more respectfully. When M. Helvetius published his work upon *The Mind*, he said to his friends, *I must see how Madame Geoffrin will receive me: I cannot judge with any certainty of the real success my work meets with till I have consulted that thermometer of the public opinion.*

volence, it will scarcely be believed that Madame Geoffrin could have enemies. But what is to be done? —had not even Fenelon enemies?—We must all submit to this cruel law of nature, and weep over human kind. It is true that Madame Geoffrin had none but among the women, and I say it with regret for the sake of the sex; but to their honour I must confess that these enemies were few in number, and that all the women by whom she was really known, cherished and respected her. When she perceived herself the object of dislike to any one, the only sentiment she felt in return was pity; not that sort of pity which is closely allied to contempt and humiliates the object of it, but that which compassionates and pardons. "If you find," said she to her friends, "people who hate me, be cautious not to "say what little you may think in my favour; they "will only hate me the more, they will only be the "more tormented, and this I do not wish."

"Such was, my dear friend, she whom society, whom humanity, in every possible sense of the word, has had the misfortune to lose, and whom I, more than any one, have lost. She loved me as her son, and my confidence in her knew no bounds. Alas! in the space of a year I have lost the two persons[1] who of all the world were the most dear to me, and who, to my infinite delight, loved each other tenderly. They were truly worthy of each other,-

[1] The other was Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse, who has already been mentioned as living for the latter years of her life with M. d'Alembert.

truly worthy to love each other, though of very different characters. But worthy, and benevolent hearts have, like the loadstone, if I may use the expression, a common pole by which they are attracted, by which they are drawn and closely united together. Nature, who orders that we should be born to trouble and to tears, has made us, with this view, two sad presents, of which the majority of mankind scarcely ever think; death, which puts an end to the sorrows that torment us, and melancholy to assist us in supporting life under the evils with which it is tainted. With a heart yet full of the first loss I had sustained, I went every day to Madame Geoffrin to deplore it with her. Her friendship heard and soothed me. This consolation, which was so dear to me, is now snatched away, and among those societies that fill up the vacancies of life, there is no one to whom I can speak or who can understand me. I used to pass all my evenings with the friend whom I had lost, and I could pass my mornings with her who yet remained to me. She is gone, and for me there is no longer either evening or morning.

" I saw Madame Geoffrin at the beginning of her illness on that bed of affliction and death where she languished more than a year. " Why," said I to myself, " must she disappear from the earth, she " whose loss will be severely felt by so many friends, " by so many sufferers, while I, who am of no impor- " tance to any one yet remain here." Cruel circumstances deprived me of seeing her to the very end

of her life, and soothing by my attentions the lingering end to which she was doomed. Her heart called me, but her mouth dared not obey her heart.* I was condemned to lose her a year before those friends who closed her eyes. Let it be permitted me at least to address her shade, if it can hear me, in those affecting words addressed by Tacitus to that of his virtuous father-in-law, Agricola, carried off by a lingering death from his absent family. *Too few were the tears that honoured your last moments, and your eyes, as they closed for ever, sought in vain for mine which were not to be found.*—Here, my friend, the pen drops from my hand, my eyes are filled with tears, I no longer see what I write.—Adieu."

We cannot refuse ourselves the pleasure of transcribing here the letter with which the King of Prussia honoured Marshal Saxe, after the visit he received from him at Potsdam in 1749. "I should "have been very glad, my dear Marshal, if it had "been in my power to make your time pass more "agreeably when I had the happiness of receiving "you here. I will confess that I preferred the in-"terests of my curiosity and the desire of instruct-"ing myself, to the attentions I ought to have had "both for your person and your health. I intreat

* It will be recollected that Madame de La Ferté-Imbault, the daughter of Madame Geoffrin, had from the commencement of her mother's last illness, shut the door of her house against M. d'Alembert, M. Marmontel, and the Abbé Morellet.

" your pardon for having kept you so much seated,
" and made you sit up later than is your general
" practice. I was not aware that this might in-
" commode you. I am so good an ally of France,
" that far from wishing to injure the health of her
" heroes, I would most gladly prolong their lives.
" A few days ago the conversation turned upon
" matters of war, when the old beaten question
" was started, which of the memorable battles
" gained, reflected the most honour upon the Ge-
" neral. Some said it was that of Almanza, others
" supported that of Turin; for my part, I was of
" opinion that it was the victory which a General
" at the point of death gained over the enemies of
" France.

" I pass over the many obliging things which
" you say to me. The aim of the greater part of
" our actions is to merit the approbation of worthy
" and of great men. If the recollection of my friend-
" ship be engraved on your memory, it is all at
" which I aimed. Talents render private indivi-
" duals equal to Kings, and, not to attempt var-
" nishing over the matter, the advantages of merit
" often efface those of birth. I wish you nothing
" but health, there is already no species of glory
" with which you are not loaded."

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